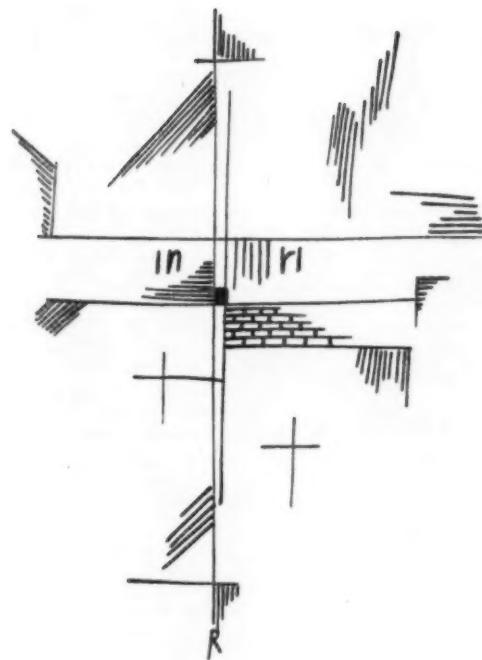


# the christian SCHOLAR



A Theological Perspective  
of the Secular / Ronald Gregor Smith  
Lecomte du Noüy Award for 1959  
other articles and reviews

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## THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

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# The Christian Scholar

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## THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

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# Michael Beresford Foster

Died October 15, 1959

*Many of our readers already know that a beloved and creative leader of concerns in relating Christianity and academic scholarship, Michael Foster, died during the night of October 14-15, 1959 in his rooms at Christ Church, Oxford. He had for many years been Student (Fellow) of Christ Church and Lecturer in Philosophy in the University of Oxford. In addition to a number of essays, printed lectures, and articles or reviews in a number of journals, he was also author of The Political Philosophies of Plato and Hegel and Mystery and Philosophy, the latter in the Library of Philosophy and Theology of the SCM Press. Whether he was writing about science or theology or philosophy, a persistent interest was evident in all his writings in the problem of how thought-models and statements derived from a Greek cultural context could become suitable for an understanding and communication of the Christian faith. And a counter-interest seemed to him correlative, namely how faith, directed upon mystery even as revelation springs from mystery, influenced the forms and substance of Western science and philosophy. His life was shaped in these latter years by such a dialogue, the very center of a Christian scholar's thought and work.*

*At the time of his death Michael Foster served as chairman of the University Teachers Committee of the World's Student Christian Federation and also as chairman of the University Teachers Group in Great Britain (comparable to the Faculty Christian Fellowship in the U.S.A. and other groups elsewhere in the world). He had been invited by Duke University to give a number of lectures in its Institute of Politics and Religion and was making plans to spend six weeks in the United States in March and April of 1960. His death under tragic circumstances has deprived us all of a gentle and profound leader in the further development of university concerns. He saw the tasks of a Christian movement among college and university teachers with simple clarity. Two seemed to him basic tasks, and he stated them in these terms as recently as late September 1959: "(1) to encourage the formation of local groups in universities, and to act as a kind of clearing-house for the exchange of information about their doings, and (2) to organize conferences in which our members can meet one another and discuss the matters with which we are concerned." He felt that one of the special values of work devoted to these ends was that of encouraging conversation about basic questions between Christians and non-Christians. In recent months he tended to*

#### THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

*return to an earlier preoccupation with fundamental thinking about the university. Recognizing that important changes had occurred in universities in recent years, he sensed the urgency of subjecting basic principles of academic policy to thorough examination. He stated the following as examples of basic questions: "Should universities be autonomous? If so, into whose hands is power being placed? Should all students who are intellectually qualified have a university education? If so, shall this demand be met by expanding the universities, or by founding other institutions of higher training outside the universities? . . ." He asserted his own belief in university autonomy, identifying himself with most university people. He asked nevertheless this question: "But are we in a position to support our beliefs in a way likely to carry conviction to anyone who radically questioned them? I do not think that I am." The type of inquiry which he foresaw as necessary must be undertaken in many lands. Despite earlier preparatory work, for many persons the examination called for is a new one. To undertake it out of Christian concern will prompt additional questions. In this area as in so many others, we have now to carry on the responsibilities to which Mr. Foster gave such generous and wise attention. The true proportions of his life will be clearly seen only in time. The circumstances which led him to take his own life only point to the intensity of the warfare he carried on in himself. As Mr. David L. Edwards put it in a letter, "to fail in an inner struggle such as he waged is almost as good as to win."*

*We are grateful to have the permission of the Rt. Rev. C. A. Simpson, Dean of Christ Church, and of the Rev. Dr. V. A. Demant, Canon of Christ Church, to present here the sermon preached on Sunday, October 18, 1959 by Dr. Demant.*

Christ Church mourns today over the loss of one of its senior members, Mr. Michael Foster. Whatever may be said of him later and better, on this first Sunday after his death a tribute is due to his memory. He was known and loved and respected not only by his pupils, by his academic colleagues and the domestic staff of the College, but also by many members of the University outside these walls, as well as by men and women of the general public. What is more, this esteem very often grew out of an immense gratitude which many, both young and older, feel they owe to Michael Foster for his understanding, his sympathy, and for the trouble he took in helping them spiritually or intellectually, or with just deep personal concern for their problems.

Those of you here to whom he may be only a name, must therefore forgive us for using this sermon period in order to voice briefly what we feel we have lost so suddenly. Indeed, it may not be so difficult for a general congregation to allow

### MICHAEL BERESFORD FOSTER : A SERMON

us this domestic privilege, because, as I hope I may help you to see, there is a sermon to be found in Michael Foster's life and teaching and struggles.

All who knew him well, and mostly those who found their Christian faith through him or had it strengthened, were aware that his own faith — which he came to late in life after a period of agnosticism — was maintained only through a recurring struggle against practical doubt, and this is what made him such a wonderful kindler of faith in others. You know, there are two types of Christians who have conveyed to their fellow men the resources of Christian faith, and the Lord uses both types in His own way. One type seems favouritely blessed by Almighty God; their faith is a steady, unruffled, strong assurance which carries them across the dark patches leaving no deep spiritual scars. Such were in modern times men like John Wesley and Archbishop William Temple. The other type is used by God, almost unmercifully it seems to us; they cannot relinquish the faith to which they have committed themselves, but for them it is not one of "the consolations of religion," it is a heroic struggle to hold on with the will to obedience and discipleship, when often their thoughts and feelings seem to say they are God forsaken. John Henry Newman was, I think, one of these, and so was Bishop Charles Gore. These men acquire a seminal and robust kind of certainty, all the stronger for the pressure of practical doubt, especially doubt of their own acceptance by their Lord and Master. Michael Foster was one of these. I was privileged to have his confidence from time to time in moments of deep depression which afflicted him. The roots of that recurring melancholia were never clear to me or perhaps to him; and it would be impertinent and irreverent to probe too deeply. I can only say that I have a terrible sense of failure, in that I was only able to restore his confidence for limited periods. I think it is a testimony to the depth and reality of his faith that it gave him over and over again a desolating sense that he was betraying it. Of the three theological virtues he had faith and charity in abundance; but somehow there frequently occurred a hitch just where faith spills over into the virtue of hope.

Perhaps, if he had met wider Christian influences after his conversion, he would have been able to see his repeated dejection as part of "the dark night of the soul," which when first met seems as if it means that God has taken Himself away from us into a far country, but when understood becomes a means of assurance that God holds us in our very being in spite of leaving our thoughts and feelings bereft of a sense of His presence.

I would say that Michael Foster came by a hair's breadth only short of complete sanctity; he had all the marks of holiness but just missed the joy of the saints. Yet, note how the Lord used him. In the two days since he died I, and at least one of my colleagues on the Chapter, have received messages of condolence from people — odd people about town and university dons here and elsewhere — who say that they owe their faith and their soul to him. Isn't it as if, in a way, the Lord sometimes laid upon him the doubt and desolation he was removing from

### THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

others, like the suffering servant ? He was taking their burdens upon himself, and in his great humility frequently thinking that he himself was the castaway. I was about to describe him as a heroic soul, but he would not have liked that, for he tells us in his book *Mystery and Philosophy* that heroism is not a Christian virtue. The heroic man prays: "Lead me into temptation so that I may test out the power of the good in me," he quotes from Bonhoeffer. But the Christian prays, "Lead me not into temptation," the fiery trials which I may not be able to stand. If then we may not call him a heroic soul, we can certainly say that his was a sacrificial life; he gave to others what he could not all the time ensure for himself, namely the assurance that he was accepted of God.

This man endured the Cross in himself; he could have avoided that by relinquishing his commitment to Christ. He was one of those on whom tribulation comes "because of the Word," as our Lord said in explaining the Parable of the Sower. But, unlike the men whom Jesus there described, Michael never shirked the tribulations by going back when he had once put his hand to the plough. That is how the Lord uses some of his most faithful servants. As for most of the rest of us, for whom our faith is a calm certitude or a shallower and painless contentment, well ! we may be thankful that God has used us mercifully, and we have our own kind of ministry. But we are not of very much use to Him; we haven't suffered enough in our faith. We get the blessing which Jacob received without having had to wrestle with the Angel of the Lord.

We must then thank God for this sacrificial life. I would have conventionally said that it has been cut off too soon. But a letter I received corrects me, and I now see with greater insight. It is from a lady in this University, and she puts the matter in a different light. She writes: "Rather it seems to me that it was a great grace that allowed someone as heavily burdened with unresolved sorrows as Michael Foster was, to continue so courageously and faithfully for so long."

He must have been one of the best loved university teachers in the whole country. We loved him here, though he tried us sometimes by turning a direct practical problem into a tense moral dilemma. He was at the disposal of pupils and outsiders who came to him for guidance and got it. He was also at the mercy of unhappy people with a grudge against life or against others, and he agonized over whether perhaps they had not been victims of injustice. Here again is the sacrificial life in action.

I have touched on these solemn and religious aspects of our dear colleague's life, and I know that he would wish me to say these things now, which if they had been said in his lifetime, it would have been telling secrets.

There are other things. Of his work as a teacher of philosophy I am not the man to speak, nor is this the place. But two aspects of his work strike me as adding to the picture of his mind and personality. A good many years ago Michael Foster wrote some articles in a philosophical journal on the origin of the scientific impulse in Western civilization, and connected it with the world outlook brought

### MICHAEL BERESFORD FOSTER : A SERMON

about by the influence of the Bible and Christian Theology. This apparently paradoxical thesis has been quoted over and over again by others who have shown its importance by building upon it. But Michael never seemed to think they were of much importance or value, and did not take up the matter again.

The second thing I have in mind is the way Foster would handle a purely secular subject like Political Theory, respecting its autonomy as a secular discipline, and at the same time making clear that a Christian thinker must see its meaning as a worldly matter in the light of God's providence. He never brought in religion as a pinch of piety to sweeten up worldly concerns. He sought to place secular things like government or science — those which belong to this *Age*, this *saeculum* between Creation and the Last Day — to place them in a framework fashioned by God. Michael never encouraged people to go about being pietistic when they were meant to be scientific or political. But he strove to suggest that secular things were an essential element in God's world.

Today is the Feast of St. Luke the Evangelist, who gave us the Third Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles. He tells us in the preface to his Gospel what he was after. It was to give to his readers — personified as one, Theophilus, lover of God — to give them an assurance that the faith they were living by was grounded in evidence which could be tested. He did it by finding out and collecting all that was known about the Christ. Luke himself had not been an apostle or an eye-witness, but he went for his information to those who could testify. Thus he gave us what is in some ways the fullest, best written, and most moving account of the strange happenings which started our faith.

Michael Foster too wanted students and scholars to find the same kind of assurance in testing what they believed, and this was to be done, not by running to the Bible or theology or the Church between times, but by pursuing the things they were studying as if the pursuit were a vocation. His own life was a vocation, and a costly one to himself.

*To God's gracious mercy we commit him;  
and may light eternal shine upon him.*

**Communications**

**TO THE EDITOR:**

You have done me a great service by bringing out into the light the article, "The Work of the Church in the University," by John S. Duley in the September 1959. Those of us who work cooperatively in the mission to the university are all conscious of some esoteric knowledge which Presbyterian university pastors gain at their famous APUPS meetings. This paper of Mr. Duley is evidently part of the *arcana*, for it appears to this outsider to announce the "party platform." Certainly we must congratulate the Presbyterians for following Dr. George MacLeod and Dr. Hendrick Kraemer and taking a new look at the laity with deadly serious intent. Something comes out which is different and challenging.

I must admit a vigorous reaction however in my own case. Sometimes I wish I were a Calvinist enough to divide the ministry of the Church in the safe departments of Christ's ministry — Prophet, Priest, and King — and thus be able to turn properly toward University, Church, and State as the case might be. Then to have an office of Teaching Elder all set up for me to quickly transfer to the University would be wonderful. Unfortunately I am a Lutheran, and we never seem to face this problem of the University or culture in a clear-cut way, often retreating into the completely safe precincts of Church-owned schools; perhaps we are responsible partially for the university of the Enlightenment.

My reaction is stimulated however not by the positive emphases that Mr. Duley makes but by the negative assertions upon which he bases them. If these positive gifts could be given by the Presbyterians as their part of an ecumenical mission always broader and more extensive than this, I would not mind. But with the sub-title of the article, "Four Obstacles," and with the assumptions upon which Mr. Duley makes his points, I am in disagreement.

1. The first obstacle Mr. Duley finds is that way of thought which imagines the Church as the Mother of the Christian and not as the grown up Body of Christ. While granting the eschatological meaning of the Church as the Body of Christ growing into its true nature, I would strongly insist that the thought of the Church as Mother is not the obstacle he would make it. I'm afraid that we Protestants know very little of the gradual growth of the spiritual life, step by step. We assume that one jumps full blown into the biblical faith with all it implies for life. Is there anything wrong with considering the Church as our Mother, provided this parent fully respects every stage of our growth to maturity and treats us accordingly?

Can the mission of the Church on the campus be anything else except a mission from spiritual maturity to the world of youth? Of course this implies that growing up to the full stature of Christ is the aim of the mission and that those

## COMMUNICATIONS

who serve the Church there will accept the world of youth with its struggle to faith and self-knowledge. I am coming to see the necessity of thinking of our part in terms of the stage of life where we serve. In this I have been helped by writers like Romano Guardini in *The Living God*.

2. Obstacle two seems to rest in the confusion of ministers as to their basic role anywhere, and the solution for Mr. Duley lies in a *deus ex machina* — the Teaching Elder who comes into the middle of the play and teaches the actors to play their parts. How he does this is not revealed, nor is there much help in finding these god-like characters who, though not part of the university, will immediately understand what earnest Christians in the university have been seeking to know all their lives.

The cavalier treatment of the minister of "Word and Sacraments" does not square with the experience of some of us who have served university parishes. One who is occupying such a place knows full well that his influence is greater than he has any right to expect or is prepared to give. It is a role which Christians have traditionally been willing to give to their pastor and through which they listen attentively if anything worth while is offered.

Where does the Teaching Elder get the students? At what place does the raging current of college life part for him to gather his flock? Usually at *retreats* on week-ends when everyone else is *advancing* to worship. Really . . . doesn't Mr. Duley's treatment of the minister of Word and sacraments shout volumes about sad experiences in the past with worship? Will not such an attitude be absorbed by students and help toward the development of religious beatniks who have little to do with the gathering of God's people to hear his Word and receive their Lord in Word and Sacrament?

3. Obstacle three is the religious syncretism represented by our current religious revival. Here Mr. Duley identifies the worshipping congregations in full churches as evidences of this diluted revival. This is not the whole story at all. There are many pastors who have been glad to have such a worshipping congregation within which new life can come forth. In this country where people still do attend services, should we find hope only in taking a few people away from the crowd and training them into what Giese calls "Apostles Anonymous"? Certainly many of us in university work, unable to get crowds 've justified our efforts in the quality of the few — and as Commencement draws closer they become fewer and purer and harder to bring to the true meaning of Incarnation — even the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

4. Obstacle four to Mr. Duley is the "traditional form of the Church's work in the university," usually called "student work" and centering in denominational "groups" meeting on Sunday nights in local churches. If this type of work is considered to be still in vogue, everything he says about it deserves a rousing cheer.

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But I wonder whether this isn't a caricature of what is actually going on, as even Mr. Duley admits. Obviously only the socially dispossessed or the religiously inclined come to such meetings; most students have neither the time nor the interest.

Unfortunately turning trained Churchmen loose on a campus without any denominational label or visible center for their work is not much better. The total number of students an active faculty member can actually reach is limited even though he has a recognizable place in the community. To act without even the recognizing garb of a role is even more confining.

It has been the experience of some of us, who have centered our thrust in a fresh approach to Word and Sacraments, that we get the very best students who are active on their campuses at a time they set aside for worship. To reach them meaningfully at this time and place is no mean accomplishment. For a growing intellect to be exposed to meaningful worship time and again during the process of growth seems to be of more value than hiding oneself as a middleman to verbalize the message which such students ought to receive.

I have not wished to be critical of Mr. Duley's emphasis, provided that it be an emphasis within the whole ministry to the whole campus. Perhaps the Presbyterians should lead the way with their Teaching Elders toward this particular task — but only within the whole context. Any denominational emphasis which is negative to the positive contributions of others will draw criticism today. For none of our traditions is big enough to encompass the ministry of Christ to culture. Wherever we follow the limited promptings of our own experience, valid though it be, we will fail to be whole or to exhibit the reality of the Body of Christ. I personally do not like to feel that my approach is termed an obstacle, indeed "Four Obstacles," especially when the argument does not show that the writer has truly exposed himself to what I am doing.

HENRY E. HORN, *Pastor*  
*University Lutheran Association*  
*Cambridge, Massachusetts*

# A Theological Perspective of the Secular

RONALD GREGOR SMITH

*The following paper was read to a Conference on "The Meaning of the Secular" at the Ecumenical Institute, Bossey, Switzerland, September 15-20, 1959. The conference was led by Dr. J. Edward Dirks, Yale University Divinity School, and Dr. Charles West, Associate Director of the Ecumenical Institute, in behalf of the University Teachers Committee of the World's Student Christian Federation. The purpose of this consultation was 1) to evaluate the secular as a point of view toward the various disciplines in which university teachers are involved and as a description of their nature, and 2) to discuss a theological understanding of the secular which would help to define the Christian's responsibility in and toward these disciplines.*

As I understand the course of our discussions during this week, none of us has attempted to defend established positions or to engage in any kind of tactical maneuvering for a verbal victory or concession from one side or the other of two opposed forces, the claims of the theologian in particular over against the assumptions of the secularist. And I certainly do not feel called upon to try to do this now. Least of all do I regard myself as having the last word or as coming down, like a somewhat breathless *deus ex machina*, to resolve a plot which has got entangled beyond any hope of a human solution. For I consider that our social and personal and historical situation has reached too critical a stage for any mere scoring of points.

At the same time I recognize that I may nevertheless have to run the gauntlet between certain opposing theories and positions of theologians on the one hand and secularists on the other. I am ready to do this and in a sense to do it without weapons, in a defenceless manner, even if I seem rather naive and primitive and unsystematic to the theologians and rather arbitrary, and naive as well, to the secularists. In a sense I do not choose this approach, but it is chosen for me by the fact that I consider myself to be simultaneously some kind of theologian and immersed willy-nilly in secular styles of apprehension and living.

So I have no intention of attempting any kind of systematic assemblage of theological views as a kind of weapon with which to belabour the secularist into unconsciousness and possible submission. Even if I thought this kind of systematization were central to the work of theology, which I do not, I still should not

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Mr. Ronald Gregor Smith is Professor of Theology at the University of Glasgow, Scotland. He was formerly editor of the Student Christian Movement Press in Great Britain and is author of *The New Man: Christianity and Man's Coming of Age*.

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undertake it here, for in doing so I should be untrue to the other side of the reality which we all face, namely the secular style in which we all share.

My fundamental assumption is that the world which the theologian looks at and the world which the secularist looks at are one and the same. I do not argue this; I accept it as the situation in which I personally find myself. Certainly this one world can be read differently, and this is what constitutes our particular problem. But if we were to leave it there and recognize the differences as determinative and the oneness of the world and therefore the oneness of the truth as merely incidental and even a matter of indifference, then I think we might as well give up hope altogether. And to give up hope means to push man out of the centre of the picture and merely to use him for some other purpose extraneous to his actual being.

The centre of the picture is man. I mean this in a quite particular sense, I hope a sense which the theologians proper will not simply decry as mere anthropology and which the secularists so-called will not want to write off as veiled reactionism. Père Chardin, that remarkable Jesuit scientist and scholar, one of the rare examples in our time of the liberally-minded *Wissenschaftler*, writes of modern man in his posthumous work, *The Phenomenon of Man*: "We have become aware that in the great game that is being played we are the players as well as the cards and the stakes."<sup>1</sup> Two hundred years ago in the heyday of the Enlightenment, Johann Georg Hamann, the friend and critic of Kant, said that the way of man leads through the descent to hell of self-knowledge, *die Höllenfahrt der Selbsterkenntnis*. Both these men held in their relatively different ways to a Christian confession of faith. Yet both of them have what is to my mind the characteristic modern insight, namely that it is man, individual man, but also man in his wholeness as man, who is the real theme of man's interest. For these two, Chardin and Hamann alike, it is man's self-awareness that constitutes man as man, and it is this self-conscious man who both makes and constitutes the reality of history.

My subject is therefore this man: man in his wholeness as man, and man as responsible for history. This for me is the central and inclusive reality which takes in the material alike of theology and of secularism.

I must now attempt a definition of what I mean by theology. It is easier to say what it is not. Theology is not simply the elaboration of propositions or doctrines about God. Nor is it the assertion or the maintenance of a specific world-view or a metaphysic against some other. A battle of ideologies may take place in the domestic circles of theology, but it is better conducted behind closed doors. In the last resort this is not the central task of theology. It is regrettable that the Church in many places should be so ready to identify itself with some

<sup>1</sup>Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man*, trs. by Bernard Wall. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959.

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kind of ideology that it sees its task to consist in overthrowing some other ideology. It is possible that Marxism may be an enemy to be laid low, more especially as Marxism is historically so near a relation of Christian points of view; but it is indisputable that the marxist himself, if he is to be considered as an enemy, can only be faced as such in the ultimate Christian situation, which is not one of ideologies but of faith, hope, and love. Of course the battle of concepts has gone on in one form or another throughout the life of Christianity. I think for instance of the partner concepts of the holy and the profane, or of the more refined partners of the natural and the supernatural, or of the concepts already so confusedly intermingled in the thought-world of the New Testament, the concepts of other-worldly and this-worldly. But the struggles for clarification which have gone on in these various battles have always been secondary to the main issue.

This main issue I put provisionally in the form of a question: is the controlling power in human life made by men, or not? My own answer, as any real answer, rests upon a decision. My decision is that the primary and ultimately controlling power is not made by men but is given to men.

Is this the dividing line? Are all theologians determined by response to a givenness whereas all secularists are determined by a particular understanding of free and creative humanness?

If we were simply fighting a battle with a clearly defined enemy, then this kind of dividing line might be accepted. Unfortunately I find myself here to be my own enemy as well, and no such neat division is possible. For the secularist can well say that he too of course works from a givenness, only he does not immediately claim for this givenness any kind of heteronomous or spiritualist or sacral sanction such as he might charge the theologian with possessing, or thinking he possesses, in the form of an unprovable revelation; while the theologian on the other hand might equally say that he too assigns a very important place, indeed in a specific sense the ultimate place, to free and creative humanness. I think that with varied reservations most theologians would for instance be ready to endorse the dictum of Max Scheler, who spoke of the characteristic achievement of Europe as consisting in the *Wertsetzung der freien Persönlichkeit*, which we might translate as "the establishing of free personality as the value."

It is perhaps hardly necessary to point out — certainly not to the theologians and probably not to the secularists either, though in each case the assessment of the situation is a different one — that in the present state of theology it is extremely difficult to get solid grounds of agreement. The fact is that ever since the *Aufklärung* and strictly speaking even further back, ever since the break of Europe with its own so-called mediaeval period, theology has been in a state of immense, and one must also add, sometimes chaotic, motion. Sometimes this has meant that theology has, from its aspect as a human science, either inaugurated or reflected changes in the understanding of man and the world. The rise of strict

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literary criticism for instance is very much bound up with the story of biblical exegesis. The chief problem of our time, the nature of history, has likewise been brought into the forefront and even, as I shall mention later in the biblical context, been brought into being by christological necessities. On the other hand this chaotic motion has sometimes looked — especially, I might add, to a rather unhistorical assessment — like the mere death-throes of theology. For instance the retreat of theology before certain developing views of the world, especially in the nineteenth century the beginnings of evolutionary views, certainly looked to the theologians of that time and to their secularist opponents like the abandonment of vital positions. The matter was not helped by the bad temper, indeed the virulence, with which the battle was waged and the grudging manner in which the Church accepted defeat. And if we look at the present time, quite apart from what I might call standard differences of Confessional attitudes, there are differences in standpoint between leading Protestant theologians, for instance between Karl Barth and Rudolf Bultmann, which might well seem to an outsider to spell the bankruptcy of theology: when you are faced with what seems in Barth to be the last magnificent fling of a heteronomous dogmatism and in Bultmann to be the last reduction of theology to a ghostly anthropology, emptied of all historical strength.

But let me return to the question I have asked: is the controlling power in human life made by men or given to them? The theologian answers, it is given; and he adds, it is given to men in such a way that it is also made by them. That is, man is both recipient and maker, both controlled, limited, and the controller, in freedom, in a freedom which has the real substance of freedom, and that means, is unlimited. It is in this paradoxical situation where man recognizes both his dependence and his independence, his being controlled and his controlling, his being both limited and unlimited, that the main theological issue lies, so far as the perspective leads towards the meaning of the secular.

I put it another way. The basic question for theology is neither What are we to do? nor How are we to think of things? but Whence do we receive? That is to say, it is neither a simple manual or code of conduct nor indeed any kind of action which is the first concern of theology. (This of course includes, in our particular perspective, the whole concern of Christianity, for theology formally speaking is just the working out of what Christians believe.) Nor again is the prime concern of theology any structure of thought. It is easy for theologians to go off the rails here and to get involved in endless and delightful discussions about the relation of faith and reason. All I should like to say about this matter is that while dogmatics is an absolutely essential discipline for Christianity, especially as the internal or domestic effort to understand what it is concerned with, though also as the effort to make clear to the non-Christian what its general intention and scope are, so that it may make clear what is the minimum space it requires as a breathing-space in the world — a true dogmatics must never be equated with a structure or system of thought consisting of a series of propositions, whether

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interlinked or not, about God and the world. But a true theological concern, and therefore the guiding concern for a true dogmatics, has to do neither with action in itself nor with thought in itself but with this question, Whence do we receive? The theological key word here is grace. In less strict but more contemporary language — at least in the language of writers like Martin Buber and Karl Jaspers — the key word would be otherness. By these words, grace and otherness, I wish to indicate the theological concern which is nothing else but a kind of witnessing or pointing: the ultimate theological concern is with men as having to do with what is not themselves, with what they do not and never can possess at all, as part of their self-equipment or as material for their self-mastery, but with what comes to them all the time from beyond themselves.

If I may put the matter at its lowest estimate, we may say that theology begins with the recognition of God as being not-man, as being over against man. Simultaneously Christian theology recognizes this otherness as pressing in upon man, and again to put it at its lowest, as a kind of disturbance. It would be fairly simple at this point to elevate this preliminary suggestion in terms of one or the other traditional or fashionable theological or philosophical or religious *Begrifflichkeiten* or conceptual structures. For instance Rudolf Otto, having learned much from Schleiermacher, speaks here of the numinous; a rationalist like St. Thomas Aquinas speaks of the life of nature being completed by grace; Karl Barth or his real master, Kierkegaard, speaks of the infinite qualitative difference between God and man. I certainly would not wish to decry the achievement of any one of those great doctors of theology. But I must try to keep to the fundamental naivete which seems to me to be essential if there is to be real conversation between our different positions. And so I say that this recognition of a given otherness, which is at the same time a disturbance, a question, addressed to man's being, is from the Christian point of view by no means something that takes place in isolation or abstraction. It takes place in this world which is also in a special sense man's world. The God that Christian theology speaks about here is not God in isolation but God in the world. Theology here faces intellectually its one and only problem. Christian faith on the other hand does not face any problems but simply decides to go a certain way. To Christian faith it is God in the world and for the world who constitutes the ground of action and understanding. But Christian theology has to try to speak about this givenness in such a way that, while God is given in and for the world, at the same time he is recognized as distinct from the world, and therefore, while given in the phenomena of the world, i.e., in its structures and events and even in human persons in their relationships, yet he is never recognized as a phenomenon of the world. In Barth's language God is always subject; that is, he can never be an object of experience if by experience you mean the direct perceptual apprehension of an object among other objects in the world.

This means that simultaneously with the recognition of God's presence the

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theologian recognizes that no immediacy is possible. God cannot be inferred in the world. He cannot be demonstrated. His existence cannot be proved. Nor on the other hand can we take refuge in the identification of his presence with a pantheist position. God's presence is apprehended rather as an action or event in and through the structures of the world. Strictly speaking God cannot be seen, nor can he be brought in as the conclusion of an argument. While it is in the human situation that his presence is recognized, yet it is not in nature or history as rounded and completed entities in and for themselves that this recognition takes place. The traditional and to some extent positive statement which emerges at the end of these negatives is that God's presence in the human situation is apprehended in faith.

I am not able to say much here in a direct way about the meaning of faith. A remarkable analysis of the meaning of faith has just been published by Gerhard Ebeling, *Das Wesen des christlichen Glaubens*. I quote some sentences from this work which can be taken as a kind of summary of what I have said so far:

Man's true freedom consists in his receiving himself from elsewhere, in his not having himself to thank for himself, in his not being his own master and thus not being able to free himself from himself . . . for the mystery of personal being is that it is in truth a being called from elsewhere, an existence in response and as response, and that therefore man is wholly himself when he is not caught up in himself but has the real ground of his life outside himself.<sup>2</sup>

This much I may add, that faith is basically a decision about your life which involves you in a recognition of this otherness which presses in upon you. The focus of this otherness is the historical figure of Jesus, otherwise pregnantly described as the Word which God has uttered, and that means the Word which God has done in historical human circumstances. I am not ignoring this historical focus if I say that the work of theology is to understand what faith means. For faith is simply the reaction of man to God's action. It is the response of man to the question which rises up in man's own being, the question of the source and goal of man's particular being.

Implicit in what I have said are one or two matters, secondary decisions you might call them, which I mention in passing. First, in what I have said I have cut myself adrift from a great deal of traditional theologizing, in particular what I would call the theology of demonstration or the whole system of natural theology. I do not deny a place to a certain kind of "natural" theology, an extra-Christian understanding of or even an approach to God. But as a Christian I am not prepared to speak about God except in terms of a decision of faith about his

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<sup>2</sup>Gerhard Ebeling, *Das Wesen des christlichen Glaubens*. Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr. 1959, p. 145.

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presence in the world. I am also not able to speak about God in any kind of spiritualizing terms, whether in old-fashioned allegorizing or more fashionable typologizing or in terms of a metaphysical system. It is God in the world, in this one world, whose presence to faith I should put as the kind of basic minimum of Christian apprehension.

This brings me, I think and hope, near to the expression of the secularist style of thinking and living. Let me try to define how it seems to me that the secularist thinker sees the world. I think it is somewhat misleading to speak of the secularist point of view as being basically just a new religion. So far as wholeness in the point of view and zeal for its propagation are concerned, then perhaps there are illustrations of secular enterprise which might carry that title. But it is better to reserve the word religion for phenomena which have a minimum of certain common items, and that minimum I should say includes, besides a set of convictions, a code of behaviour and some kind of institutional or organizational set-up. Christianity as a faith is always in conflict with Christianity as a religion, and there is an important — I should be inclined to say the most important — sense in which Christian faith includes within itself the permanent protest against its own religious forms and expressions. In this important sense Christianity understands itself as being more than a religion, as including within itself the negation of religion, though permanently destined to carry religion along with itself, that is, to give form and expression to its own faith in some kind of concord with traditional and social expectations.

But secularism cannot really be described either as a religion or as a faith. I think that as a historical description Jaspers' words are apt when he speaks of the modern "transformation of the transcendental conception into a seeing of the world as immanent movement"; and similarly Gabriel Marcel, when he speaks in his diary, *Being and Having*, of the radical formula of autonomy as being summed up in the words, "I want to run my own life."

Both definitions point to a world which is self-contained and in which man is self-sufficient: there is one world, and man is the meaning of it. These definitions go further than a simple description of the historical emergence of secularism, which, as Dr. Charles West has said in his memorandum, has meant "the withdrawal of areas of thought and life from religious — and finally also from metaphysical — control, and the attempt to understand and live in these areas in the terms which they alone can offer." This description is I think true to the historical development, though I think we may add to it the rather critical remark of Marcel: "I am tempted to think that the idea of autonomy is bound up with a kind of narrowing or particularization of the subject."<sup>3</sup> In the terms of our conference we might say that the very successes of a secularist standpoint depend upon a specialization

<sup>3</sup>Gabriel Marcel, *Being and Having*, trs. by Katharine Farrer. Boston: Beacon Press, 1951, p. 131.

which might well in the long run destroy even the successes. It is certainly true though — and even keeping the dangers in mind — that historically speaking a secularist standpoint allows in principle every area of life to work out its own purpose according to the procedures and hypotheses which are inherent in that area. And again it is true that this development has meant the freeing of all kinds of human activities and enterprises from the bond of heteronomous standpoints. This is the kind of thing which Dietrich Bonhoeffer recognized, though without properly evaluating: the spontaneous break-away of individual disciplines in ever-increasing power of self-determination.

All this is to my mind incontrovertible, and I can only explain the enthusiasm with which Bonhoeffer's remarks have been taken up (by students of theology more readily than by their teachers) as reflecting the sense of liberation in many theologians' minds when they find that a noble person and a competent thinker like Bonhoeffer does not feel bound to try to maintain any of the earlier traditional positions of theology, e.g. last ditch defense in the wrong ditch or heteronomous positivism or sheer biblicalism and so on. Unfortunately Bonhoeffer did no more than indicate the problem for theology and secularism in our time. Perhaps the actual course of his life which involved him, as a believing Christian, in the thick of the events culminating in the attempt on Hitler's life on July 20, 1944, was the only real answer to a problem which involved not only intellectual adjustments but also a venture of faith.

But more important, I think, because more pervasive is what Charles West has called the secularist *style*. This is very difficult to analyze, partly because we are all enveloped in it and partly because it is scarcely ever questioned. But let me try to look at it all the same. It includes a kind of diffident self-awareness, combined with a powerful relativism. It has spread over the whole world, as Ebeling has said, "like a spring tide," propagating itself much more quickly and effectively than any of the deliberate traditional Christian missions and even transforming old cultures, such as the Buddhist and Confucian, and thus involving the whole of mankind in a universal uniformity which curiously enough still leaves room for the play of the most ancient and deep-seated animosities and struggles for power.

Here I should like to ask a question of the secularist which is at the same time a question of myself. If this relativism of all experience is so unquestioned and at the same time man is recognized to be his own legislator, working out his purposes as he frames his provisional laws — a reasonable being "legislating universally for himself" (Marcel) — how can you avoid subsuming man himself under the category of a kind of spontaneous self-decision whose real power comes not from autonomous man but from a kind of immanent teleology of life itself? If you first recognize man's autonomy to be ultimate and determinative and then admit the relativity of everything, do you not drive man himself into a hopeless corner? How can man's autonomy be reconciled with ultimate relativism? Do

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you not have to give up one or the other, either the autonomy or the relativism ? What seems to me to happen in practice is that man as man, man in his wholeness, and man in his sole and absolute responsibility for history, takes second place to a view of the world. (This is what I meant when I described Mr. Corbett as not being secularist enough. His secularism, or pragmatism of innovation, seemed to have about it the smell of still another system or ideology.)<sup>4</sup> Man's own view of the world pushes man himself out of the centre. A kind of intellectual and spiritual suicide takes place. The secularist standpoint seems to contain this contradiction in itself; and with an insufficient grasp of its own assumption about man's autonomy it again and again relapses into various kinds of sub-human or anti-human mythologies. So Marxism and scientism and various technological collectivism replace the reality of man's life as man. I need hardly say that the critical danger which pervades every social structure today is not over-population nor scientific arrogance, not even the atom bomb, but the fearful assumption that man is there to be managed; and the classic description of that managing and manipulation is to be found in George Orwell's *1984*.

I feel that at this point my hope is betrayed by the very power of secularism which has without any doubt brought so much benefit to society. I can very easily abandon hope. It is possible to adopt the open-eyed despair of a man like Lord Russell, or to assert nothingness and take a kind of cold comfort from the mere assertion. But in the last resort no man can live by despair, but only through despair in hope.

So my question here is, Is secularism because it is tied to a view of the world (relativist, immanent, perfectionist yet pessimistic) not inherently self-destructive ? Has it not an inadequate view of man's being, so that in all that it so powerfully plans for man it actually leaves out the dimension of man's paradoxical dependence in freedom, his limited and conditioned being, as the pre-supposition for his unlimited aspirations ? This question does not intend simply to smuggle in the traditional formulas again, such as the need for the supernatural or other-worldly, in order to complete the picture of man by as it were restoring the top story to his house of the universe. But I am suggesting that the inadequacy of the secularist standpoint, as commonly presented, lies not in its concentrating on man and his history in the world but in its not concentrating enough on this fundamental situation. Secularism is not secularist enough. And so it subordinates man to a view of the world in which man's essential freedom is lost.

As I see the situation, the dilemma today is not to be solved by any kind of pathetic return. The age of ecclesiastical heteronomy is, I hope, over for ever. If there are any theologians left who really wish for a return, then we can only hope that they will not forget their church history, and the history is not confined

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<sup>4</sup>Mr. J. P. Corbett is a Philosophy Don at Balliol College, Oxford University. He was one of several non-Christians invited to this conference and had earlier presented a paper entitled "The Secular Point of View."

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to any church or sect. I should add that this kind of history is not peculiar to the Christian Church, but the temptation to heteronomous action is general to mankind: man is perennially tempted to discern an absolute at work and then to take the easy short-cut of identifying his recognition with that absolute in such a way that he thinks he actually possesses it. To think that you possess the truth or to believe that a doctrine or a system or some other authority can be infallible is the root temptation of man. And it is the temptation which suggests that man — other men — can and must be managed and manipulated.

I have suggested a criticism of the secularist standpoint from within, as it were on its own terms. It would be easy to develop this criticism along lines which are I think familiar to us all. The analyses which have been given to us by such different writers as Martin Buber, Ortega y Gasset, and Hans Urs von Balthasar do not differ essentially: perhaps Buber's elaboration of the twofold world of man, in the realm of the I-It and the realm of the I-Thou, is the best known and most useful analysis. The loss of the personal realm and with it the loss of true community is the point which is most relevant to our immediate problems. But I do not care to elaborate this. I have often tried it, and it has seemed to me that unless there is already a passionate concern present, whether dormant or outspoken, for the reality of what is meant here, you cannot really hope for a response.

If I may take an example from my own experience, I had the opportunity in the autumn of 1958 of some talks with one or two of the leading officials in the German Democratic Republic, and in my position I was able to be fairly outspoken — without, I hope, overstepping the bounds of common courtesy. Perhaps these bounds are really a constituent part of the realm in whose strength and on whose behalf I was trying to speak, and perhaps I could only have made myself understood by denying the power in whose name I tried to speak. At any rate, while I found attention, even attentiveness, and a kind of tolerant applause for what I was urging (in this case it happened to be the furthering of exchange of students between Jena and Glasgow), there was a basic and radical and deep cleft between us: there was in effect no personal dialogue, no openness, no trust, no expectation that possibly we might really understand one another. In fairness I must add that when I put forward similar proposals back home in my Faculty meeting in Glasgow, I met with fundamentally the same polite unconcern. In other words I am not talking of Communist peculiarities but of sub-human interests everywhere proliferating, the world of It swamping the world of Thou. And the only hope that I perceive here is in what Buber calls *turning*. I am sorry to say that at this point I can offer no cure for the situation in terms of the situation but only in terms of strange and unpredictable happenings, like the breath of the Spirit or the gift of grace or the vision of some newness actually changing people. Perhaps the recognition of his fundamental loneliness will somehow drive modern man out of himself, and also out of the societies in which only the same funda-

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mental loneliness is to be seen reflected in all their members, and into the situation of real self-assertion and self-decision which I should also describe as the situation of real faith.

One other chief matter remains to be discussed, and that is the connection between Christianity and secularism (which we have discussed at such length during this conference). The genesis of the secularist view is to be found in a theological understanding of man and the world. I do not mean this in a merely general sense for instance that the ideals of the Welfare State arise out of certain Christian ideas such as brotherly love and service of the community, though this is at least partly true. But this kind of generalization is as often a pious substitute for real Christian action. How often can you hear the claim made in popular Christian apologetics that it was Christianity which was responsible for the abolition of the slave trade inside the British Empire; whereas the truth of the matter is so complicated that the only possible generalization seems to me to be that, when a particular historical action is accomplished, the time for it was ripe and it happened. This does not mean that I reduce history to the level of nature, as that in autumn the plums fall from the tree, but it does mean that historical action is an almost unravellable web of many different strands.

The theological understanding of man and the world goes further back and deeper into the forces which play about and in the life of man. Quite briefly, it arises from the nature of faith as you find it expressed in the New Testament. In St. Paul's *Epistle to the Galatians* you can find the simplest adumbration of this understanding. I think especially of chapter 4, verses 1-7. Here we find faith described as involving maturity and responsibility for history. The passage is followed by an exhortation to stand fast in the freedom with which Christ has made us free. This freedom of the Christian has a twofold implication. First, the world is released from bondage to the beggarly elements, that is, it is no longer seen as the place of supernatural powers, mythologically conceived. The world, to coin a horrid word, is de-divinised. At the same time the world is seen positively as the place, distinct from God, in which man exerts his free responsibility for it. Luther said, "The sphere of faith's works is worldly society and its order." Dilthey has justly said of this remark, "With this sentence there enters into history one of the greatest organizing thoughts that a man has ever had." In fact you can say that with Luther's understanding of faith the world is both set free to be itself and also clearly established as the place where man's maturing responsibility has free play. The world becomes for the first time truly historical, that is, the place of man's responsible care. Man is the heir who has come of age and whose care it is to make history. It is in this sense that I have spoken of a givenness which is given in such a way that it is also made by men. Man is set free, but his freedom is guarded by his receptivity. He is free, but he is not God. God is no longer entangled in the world; he removes himself. God was not expelled from the world. Only a certain way of speaking about God and on his behalf has been

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expelled. And this is a good thing, especially if it reduces an unnecessary tension which arises when Christians act as though they had a vested interest in God and were under the obligation to keep on proving his existence, in a kind of anxiety lest if they ceased he would entirely vanish away. But God has removed himself. The ultimate Christian word for this removing is God's absence as acknowledged in the cry of dereliction from Christ on the cross: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" So the world becomes sheer world. But for the Christian this distinction of God from the world, and so the possibility of history and the whole secular movement in embryo, does not lead to mere or sheer undialectical atheism. Any assertion of the absence of God and even further of his non-existence among the phenomena of the world is dialectically confronted by the equal assertion of his presence. I am sorry if this sounds like a mere verbal trick, but it cannot be helped. It is really only the believer who can make the atheist assertion. Unfaith and faith go together, and the assurance of faith is only to be found in the possibility of doubt.

I shall not develop this inner dialectic of faith here. For the last question which arises here is more important for our present theme. Let us suppose that this historical source of secularist thought is in fact properly understood as deriving from Christian conceptions and Christian experience. Is it not possible to say, the source does not control the present and future course of man's life? Now if I were merely asking for a dash of piety to be introduced into free historical actions and situations, like the prayer at the opening of the House of Commons or like the Welsh Rugby team singing the hymn "Abide with me" before they play a match against England, then of course I should not make any claim here. Far less do I make any claim for a dogmatic heteronomy or theocracy. Nevertheless the Christian understanding of man in history, it seems to me, cannot be discarded like a scaffolding. It is in the particular understanding of what man is, in which is included his secular and autonomous responsibility, that I find it impossible merely to see man as developing from one stage to another, discarding as he goes the various earlier insights into his being which had brought him so far on the way. Man is in so far as he receives. He is only so far as he is whole. And this wholeness is only found in relation with others. Man's being is being in relation. This simply cannot be arranged or planned. It happens, it is an event in which man's being is disclosed in the presence of the other. And this disclosure is only possible on the basis of freedom from all ideologies, all views of the world which enclose man without reserve.

An ultimate secularism must be reached. I do not consider that this has happened merely when everything has been separated off into sheer autonomous regions or when everything is subsumed under any ideology or mould of thought whatsoever. But this ultimate secularism is reached only when the secularist process or movement goes to the very end of the road. Freed of all ideologies, in complete freedom man is then left entirely by himself. Then at this end a question

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still arises in man. The question may bring him to the apprehension of a new theonomy. Herr Miskotte calls the theonomous view the counter-pole to autonomy. I should prefer to speak of it as the waiting answer to the ultimate question which arises at the end of the secularist road. (This end of course may come anywhere any time to the individual.) The question is, Who am I? And the answer comes — in the form of another question — Adam, where art thou? This question, which is the only answer received to man's own last question about himself, is not merely a call of the conscience, the self addressing the self, but it is the liberating word spoken by God in the free historical situation of man. And it liberates man for still deeper autonomy and still richer theonomy. It is only in this way that we can speak of man's eternal being, in that he may be made new again and again in this dialogue. So he is open to the world and history.

This openness to the world, which is the basic prerequisite of free and responsible historical action, is only possible if the world itself is not closed. The freedom of man, which is unlimited, is only possible on the basis of a givenness to which man is bound. Man does not make himself. He is made. Put into more traditional Christian terminology, this means that faith makes the world again what it truly is, the creation of God. It is only because man in faith is freed from the world that he is free for the world. It is the one undivided world which the Christian shares with his fellowmen. It is a historical world, not a world of spectral beings or of over-arching plans. For the Christian the historicity of the world means that the world is entirely open to the future, yet man is without foresight. Strictly speaking, the question about the meaning of history, which can be answered only at the end of history, is an enigma which the Christian faces in faith. Historical living means living in the present in the strength of the future. This means living by hope. And in case there are some theological murmurings at my lack of explicitness about specific Christian assertions, I can willingly add that this faith, which so allows man's freedom and responsibility to be paramount for his history, springs not from the simple disappearance of God from the world but from his veiled appearance in Christ, that is, from his appearance which is simultaneously a veiling, containing also the promise, even the anticipation, of finality.

Again I should like to attempt a summary by quoting from Gerhard Ebeling:

Because faith does not live on and from the world, it makes it possible to live for the world. Because it puts an end to the misuse of the world, it opens up the right use of the world. Because faith breaks the domination of the world, it gives domination over the world and responsibility for the world. And because it drives out the pleasure and the misliking of the world, it makes room for pure joy in the world.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>*Op. cit.*, p. 211.

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It is in this kind of analysis, and in the power of faith thus understood, that man really comes to himself. In any other analysis he remains a cipher, and if man as man is not absolutely safeguarded, then anything that man undertakes is bound to end in his own destruction. He can only be properly safeguarded, it seems to me, in his inexhaustible freedom and richness of possibility if he is also recognized in his contradictions, his impossible longings as well as his sober achievements, his misery as well as his grandeur, but not one without the other. This is only possible when he recognizes himself as set between God and the world, which is at the same time the setting of God in and for the world. God in man is for the world: this is the essence of Christian belief, it is *Christian* because it is a faith in and through Christ concerning God for the world.

If that faith absolutely disappears, then man is without hope and will cease striking his tents and going out. For you can only go out and go on if you do so in faith.

# Toward the Idea of a Church College

SYDNEY E. AHLSTROM

The history of American higher education in the decade of the 1950's will almost surely appear as a time of drastic expansion and transition, and it also may come to be known as the time when a continuous and at times headlong process of secularization was halted or at least significantly retarded. The signs of a changed temper can be read almost everywhere: in the state universities, in the large private universities, and in the vast majority of the country's liberal arts colleges. The meaning of the signs however is by no means unequivocal. On occasion they signify sheer expediency, a play for financial support from Church bodies and the more pious sort of alumni. At other times it seems to be simply romanticism in a new guise or a new form of "culture-piety" that in a scientific age is mistaking poetry and the humanities for the Balm in Gilead. In many instances however it would appear to be a hard-headed recognition of the fact that a splendid birthright had been exchanged for a very inferior and much-diluted pottage. As in all important transitions, old assumptions have been challenged; thought-patterns once confidently dismissed as "out-worn" have become powerfully alive.<sup>1</sup> Where this trend was contested, much very strenuous debate has ensued, with the reverberations of Harvard's ill-defined scuffle reaching even to *The New Republic*. Where this trend was welcomed, searching programs of criticism and self-definition have been carried out.<sup>2</sup> Nobody who is concerned about the Church and higher learning can ignore either phase of this on-going discussion; but in the present essay I address those who assume that Christian higher education should be fostered, or more precisely, those who assume that the relations of Church and University should be amicable rather than hostile. For the nonce I am resisting the temptation to justify or defend these assumptions and I am by-passing completely the questions

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<sup>1</sup>On overall American trends the most inclusive and recent account is John S. Brubacher and Willis Rudy, *Higher Education In Transition, An American History* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958). Sir Walter Moberly's *Crisis In the University* (London: S.C.M. Press, 1949) seems to me the most imposing of recent works on the religious-theological issue, though none has the classic stature of John Henry Newman's *The Idea of a University* (available in many editions; though one of the most recent [C. F. Harrold, ed. New York: Longmans, 1947] is unfortunately abridged). Arthur D. Culler's *The Imperial Intellect: A Study of Newman's Educational Ideal* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1955) is an exciting work.

<sup>2</sup>*The New Republic*, April 21 and May 19, 1958. A fine example of a Church college's self-examination is that of St. Olaf College: Howard Hong, ed., *Integration in the Christian Liberal Arts College* (Northfield, Minn.: St. Olaf College Press, 1956).

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that arise in public institutions or those which are not professedly church-related. The particular concern of this essay is the problem of defining the nature and mission of a Church college.

### I

The first and overwhelming reality about the situation occupied by the American Church college is its indebtedness to the ancient and awe-inspiring heritage of Christian learning. Its tradition can be traced at least to second century Alexandria where the mingling of Hellenic, Judaic, and Christian traditions gave birth to the famous Catechetical School and where St. Clement sought so brilliantly to demonstrate that "the cure of error is not less knowledge but more."<sup>3</sup> The lines of continuity between this flowering of Christian learning and the development of the mediaeval university are anything but distinct. There are however many reasons for accepting as legitimate symbol the legend of the *translatio studii* that Professor George H. Williams has expounded in so lively a manner.<sup>4</sup> According to this cherished theory the true "school of the prophets" was translated from Israel to Greece to Alcuin's Palace School to the mediaeval universities and from there to all the world. To us, as to Cotton Mather, it offers a dynamic and flexible university-concept which is significant for its affirmations and by no means to be dismissed as a *carte blanche* to neo-mediaeval antiquarianism. In any event we are on sound historical ground in saying that in the Western Church of the Middle Ages the university as we know it becomes an incorporated and substantial reality, resting firmly on foundations laid by monastic communities, cathedral schools, and older memories.<sup>5</sup>

The Reformation likewise has roots in the academic lecture hall. Luther was a professor, a product of Augustinian monastic nurture and late mediaeval university training. Melanchthon, his chief coadjutor, was a professor of classics. And from 1517 on it becomes impossible to discuss Lutheran history without giving central place to its great university connections: Wittenberg, Straßburg, Halle, Leipzig, Göttingen, Erlangen, Heidelberg, Lund, Upsala, Royal Fredericks of Oslo, and so on. Each of the great theological traditions had an important university orientation. Even a vast popular movement like Pietism looked to the

<sup>3</sup>My brief quotation on Clement is from Charles Bigg, *The Christian Platonists of Alexandria* (Oxford, 1886), p. 50.

<sup>4</sup>"Church, Commonwealth, and College: The Religious Sources of the Idea of a University," in George H. Williams, ed., *The Harvard Divinity School* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1954); republished by the Commission on Higher Education of the National Council of Churches as *The Theological Idea of the University* (New York, 1958). See also Williams' discourse in *The Christian Scholar* (Autumn 1958, Special Issue).

<sup>5</sup>See Hastings Rashdall, *The Universities of Europe In the Middle Ages* (Oxford: 1895) and Charles H. Haskins, *Rise of Universities* (New York, 1923; paper-bound reissue, Cornell Univ. Press).

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University of Halle as its source of example and inspiration. Full appreciation of these university connections indeed is essential to an understanding of the post-Reformation development of the Lutheran Church and its theology. It may be of course that among Lutherans, as among certain other groups, academicism was as much a bane as a boon; but a value judgment, high or low, does not alter the historical fact of the university's importance.

The American churches, to say the least, have not as a general rule been oppressed by overmuch academicism notwithstanding the distinguished university connections of early Puritanism, the early Tractarian movement, the Dutch Reformed tradition, Scottish Presbyterianism, and several other groups. It is one of the commonplaces of American history nevertheless that the country's oldest colleges and universities were established by Churchmen and for the Church. The famous passage on the founding of Harvard, unlike much promotional literature (which it is), told an important and representative truth:

After God had carried us safe to New England and wee had builded our houses, provided necessaries for our livelihood, reared convenient places for God's worship, and settled the civill government, one of the next things we longed for and looked after was to advance *Learning* and perpetuate it to posterity, dreading to leave an illiterate ministry to the churches when our present ministers shall lie in the dust.<sup>6</sup>

Governor William Bradford in the neighboring colony of Plymouth paid tribute to the achievement with an equally memorable testimony to the ideal of churchly learning:

A light was kindled in Newton [Cambridge] in the Bay Colony in 1636 [with the founding of Harvard]. But the spark that touched it off came from a lamp of learning first lighted by the ancient Greeks, tended by the Church through the Dark Ages, blown white and high in the mediaeval universities, and handed down to us in a direct line through Paris, Oxford and Cambridge.<sup>7</sup>

For a half-century Harvard was alone on the continent — except for similarly inspired Spanish and French foundations to the south and north; but in 1693 William and Mary was founded for like purposes. So it was also with Yale's founders, though by 1700 the New England Puritans were more explicit in recognizing other than clerical needs. Dartmouth, Brown, Queens (Rutgers), and Princeton were all at least indirectly products of the Great Awakening of the mid-

<sup>6</sup>Samuel Eliot Morison, *The Founding of Harvard College* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1935), Appendix D, p. 432.

<sup>7</sup>From *The History of the Plymouth Plantations*, quoted by William W. Sweet, *Religion in the Development of American Culture* (New York: Scribner's, 1952), p. 162. Sweet's attribution may be wrong, but the idea is representative.

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eighteenth century, and from them in turn came a steady stream of other college founders, though by 1700 the New England Puritans were more explicit in recognizing the United States were Church colleges; and even many of the state universities (which Harvard also was) were founded and in their early years led and staffed by Christian ministers. In other words one of the glories in the crown of the Church in America is its contribution to the higher learning.\*

The second major fact about American higher education is that, regardless of other shifting attitudes and practices, it has for three centuries been continually, remorselessly secularized. This is as true of the control of the institutions themselves as of the prevailing ethos within them. As diverse nineteenth century developments disrupted the relatively homogenous Reformed caste of American Evangelical Protestantism, public institutions quite naturally lost their religious character or tone. Thomas Jefferson's plans for the University of Virginia were but a straw in the gathering wind. The trend became almost as marked in the private schools where constitutional and other legal restrictions were not applicable as in public institutions where they were.\*

The speed of change in church-related institutions of learning naturally varied from one region or denomination to another, but the process was almost everywhere in evidence. The homogeneity of constituencies deteriorated and religious ardor among students and alumni cooled. Membership on governing boards was widened to include laymen of diverse sorts and interests. The religious convictions of faculty members became increasingly less a matter of concern, and again laymen increasingly replaced the clergy. Presidents, even when ordained ministers, came to be chosen more for their capacities as administrators or fund-raisers than for their accomplishments as constructive Christian thinkers. By a reverse process ecclesiastical relationships were loosened or cut off altogether: having lost control, church-bodies lost interest in providing financial support. Often the church-connection became purely nominal, maintained by a trustee or two, a few professors in the Bible department, possibly a chaplain, and a certain residue of sentiment. Sometimes less than that. And most significantly, religious concerns faded from view. At Amherst, as the story goes, the early nineteenth century student cry, "Are you saved?" gave way to the "Beat Williams!" of the twentieth century. The change was typical. With considerable confidence therefore one may say that the Church's accomplishments during this long secularizing process have been something less than heroic. It wrote a memorable chapter in the pioneering of

\*See Donald G. Tewksbury, *The Founding of American Colleges and Universities Before the Civil War* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1932); Guy E. Snavely, *The Church and the Four-year College* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1955). Jerald C. Brauer put it succinctly: "They [the Church colleges] did not play a unique role in American higher education—they were American higher education." "The Christian College and American Higher Education," *The Christian Scholar* (Autumn 1958, Special Issue).

\*See Richard Hofstadter, *The Development and Scope of Higher Education in the United States* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1954), and many works therein cited.

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American higher learning, but as a steward of those early foundations, its performance has been deplorable, even shameful.<sup>10</sup>

For this tragic denouement the complex cluster of attitudes and practices that made up nineteenth century revivalism are perhaps most to blame, for through it came about an unfortunate separation of learning and evangelism. The main current carrying the churches westward, southward, and inward upon the large unchurched populations of the east was often professedly and defiantly anti-intellectual. The conversion experience or the "Second Blessing" of complete holiness moved to the center of the revivalist's thought-world. The rest of the Church's doctrinal teaching was then frequently brought down to the level of vulgar quibbling. "Ministers are called, not made," it was declared. The unmade men then preached and extolled the "simple gospel," taking comfort (as one of their recent apologists has said) in the words ascribed to Lincoln: "God must have loved the common people, he made so many of them."<sup>11</sup> The major, probably the dominant, pattern of Christian preaching was stridently experiential. Addressed primarily to the emotions, it came to be the ecclesiastical parallel to the Log Cabin and Hard Cider campaign that elected Tippecanoe and Tyler too. Much sound and fury, but little content. There is then a real connection between revivalism and American anti-intellectualism.

In addition to the simple encouragement of anti-intellectual attitudes however we may find in these trends the beginnings of the alienation of the intellectuals from the problems of Church and theology which is such a marked feature of America's history from the Civil War to the Great Depression. In America the "Genesis and Geology" controversy during the first half of the nineteenth century was conducted at a remarkably high level, with America's half-dozen leading geologists playing important theological roles as conscientious Christian thinkers. The evolution controversy marked a turning of the ways, with important parts of the Church beginning to lose contact with the country's leading scientific and philosophic thought. By World War I the greater part of America's most creative intelligentsia (literary, humanistic, and scientific) was sitting in the seat of the scoffers or adopting an attenuated form of Modernism. The difference between the playful clerical parodies of Mark Twain or Henry Cuyler Bunner and the fierce caricature of Sinclair Lewis' *Elmer Gantry* marks a real trend. At the Monkey-Trial in 1925 William Jennings Bryan, in whom by that time political and theological wind-

<sup>10</sup>See Thomas Le Duc, *Piety and Intellect at Amherst College, 1865-1912* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1946); Ralph H. Gabriel, *Religion and Learning at Yale* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1958); and any number of other college histories. Dean Brauer is also justified in pointing to the anemia of Church college efforts to resist patently corrosive educational philosophies at the intellectual and theological level and the tendency to make almost any program-adjustment that would increase enrollments.

<sup>11</sup>Ronald E. Osborn, *The Spirit of American Christianity* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958), p. 115; this book puts the best possible construction on trends which I regard with much less enthusiasm and also provides an up-to-date bibliography.

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baggery had reached its ultimate expression, found his faith in the Rock of Ages precluding concern for the age of rocks. Revivalism had spawned Fundamentalism and, to no small degree, Modernism as well. Communications were blocked. In the process a large percentage of the colleges, which out of social and ecclesiastical necessity even the most revivalistic of denominations had founded, were divorced from the immense intellectual problems — and resources — which the nineteenth century produced. Or else the colleges disengaged themselves from an obscurantist Church.<sup>12</sup>

In evaluating or explaining these catastrophic developments it must be insisted that the divorce between learning and evangelism was not any more required in the American case than it had been for the Dominican Order of Preachers in the thirteenth century or for the Reformers and Jesuits of the sixteenth. In fact the "New Divinity men" and their successors in this country are an adequate refutation of the idea. Jonathan Edwards (d. 1758), an active participant in and a stout defender of the Great Awakening, is also the chief ornament of America's theological history and a university president. His grandson, President Timothy Dwight of Yale (d. 1817), was an educator of reknown and a leader of the Second Awakening. His chief pupil, Nathaniel William Taylor (d. 1858), was at once a revival preacher, an important metaphysical theologian, and for a generation the intellectual center of the newly founded Yale Divinity School. Lyman Beecher and even Charles G. Finney continue this tradition of dual concern for evangelism and learning. New England in fact furnished 116 of the 276 American college presidents to serve in the pre-Civil War period, with Princeton providing another large contingent. Nearly all of them were also part of the period's great revival impulse.

Nor is the frontier sufficient either as explanation or excuse for the state of affairs that developed. Throughout the period of westward expansion Puritan New England continued to be a nursery of frontier colleges. Oberlin, Ripon, Beloit, and Carleton are but a few of those that witness to their zeal. At Beloit, College Street was plotted before there was a college. The missionaries from Princeton fanned out with similar determination to combat illiteracy and folk-theology in the West. The redoubtable Saxon Lutherans who came to frontier Missouri in 1839 forgot neither the classical German gymnasium nor the curriculum of Leipzig University when founding their own educational system. The tradition of

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<sup>12</sup>On American anti-intellectualism and related issues, see the *Journal of Social Issues*, vol. XI (1955), pp. 3-60, esp. the historical essay by Wm. Leuchtenberg; Eugene Burdick, "The Estrangement of the American Intellectual," *Pacific Spectator*, vol. IX (Autumn 1955), pp. 352-60; Daniel J. Boorstin, "The Place of Thought in American Life," *American Scholar* (Spring 1956); Norman F. Furniss, *The Fundamentalist Controversy* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1954); Conrad Wright, "The Religion of Geology," *New England Quarterly*, vol. XIV (1941), pp. 335-58; and Gail Kennedy, ed., *Evolution and Religion* (Boston: D. C. Heath, 1957), with an extensive bibliography.

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Royal Frederiks University of Oslo was a lively reality for the Norwegian founders of Luther College. And so the story could be elaborated. The adversities, to be sure, were often unbelievably severe, but the frontier did not itself require men to jettison Christian learning.

Frontier or no frontier, the nonfeasance and misfeasance of America's Church colleges contributed to the drive for secularized higher education. The growth of denominational pluralism accentuated the trend. So did the founding of theological seminaries apart from the colleges. The Church colleges fell by the wayside. Sometimes, as in the case of Rutgers, they have become state universities. More usually their church-relatedness simply became more or less nominal. Merrimon Cuninggim may be right that overt hostility to religion in the colleges reached its peak in the 'Twenties, but the process of secularization continued even after that.<sup>13</sup> The "private college" with many churchly antecedents but few real Church connections became as it remains a major American institution.

The lineaments of this institution are familiar. A chapel usually continues to occupy a dignified place on the campus; its gothic or Georgian lines frame many marriages; its counselling office remains a useful recourse for the love-lorn and spirit-torn. But from its pulpit no Timothy Dwight provides a structured, consistent, and comprehensive interpretation of the Christian gospel. More than likely the preaching is provided by a round of visiting firemen drawn from a wide denominational or inter-faith spectrum. A religion department or its equivalent is in existence but chiefly as one academic department among others, though its status is somewhat more ambiguous than other departments. The members of this department are rarely engaged in any kind of collective concern for the Church; they are often so broadly "representative of the main traditions" that they are out of contact with each other. Where there is a divinity school in the same university, they may (or may not) be more in contact with the life and problems of the Church, but this is a subject outside my present concern.

Perhaps enough has been said to warrant a few generalizations on the present status of the Church college in America. In the vast majority of cases its existence is nominal rather than real. Only in a relatively few Church bodies is its vitality a matter of primary concern. And if by "Church college" we mean an institution which has its intellectual life devotedly rooted in the "apostolic succession" of Christian learning and which has a connection with the Church that is living, active, and strong, we may go still further to say that it has become a rarity. In view of the questions to be raised in pages following, it may indeed be more appropriate to stress possibilities and potentialities than actuality. Such questioning however must not overshadow the significance of the historical fact that there are

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<sup>13</sup>Merrimon Cuninggim, *The College Seeks Religion* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1947). See also Clarence P. Shedd, *The Church Follows Its Students* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1938).

many colleges whose charters, structure, faculty, trustees, and constituencies are still such that an inquiry into the "idea of a Church college" is a relevant undertaking. The American churches do not face a "broken situation" in this area. There are grounds for hope and reasons for hard thinking.

## II

The opening consideration for such thinking in the United States must be the irreducible fact of the four-year liberal arts college. It is a major institution, and a durable one.<sup>14</sup> Our standard of living being what it is moreover this type of education is becoming increasingly indispensable to "coming of age" in America. The Church could of course channel its educational energies in other ways. The Missouri Synod (Lutheran) in fact does so; and in times past many American churches showed great interest in the academy. The commercial college also had its day as a church-supported institution. Today however the problem of the liberal arts college as a Church institution is basic; and though other issues abound, it is my primary concern in this essay.

The liberal arts college, it should be noted, is not *per se* a religious institution. The seven liberal arts which in a vague way form the basis of its curriculum were, to be sure, in some sense fashioned by the Church during the Middle Ages. But the classical humanism of ancient Greece and Rome provides the basic subject matter, and the Renaissance has had great effect on their practical content during subsequent centuries. The scientific and more recently the industrial experience of the West has also become increasingly important. These studies for the most part do harmonize magnificently with democratic ideals despite the importance in them of the cultural flowerings of pre-democratic centuries. Nazi propagandists quite rightly regarded the philosophy of the liberal arts as inimical to their interests, and Communistic ideologues must fundamentally alter it. Liberal education is thus highly incompatible with tyranny and intellectual oppression. But it is not incompatible with paganism, ancient or modern. Anticlericalism can embrace the seven liberal arts; and American secularism can come to terms with them amiably. Trends such as the enlargement of liberal studies in technological institutes or the expansion of "general education" in state universities are not to be interpreted as signs of Christian revival. There is in short nothing intrinsically Christian about the liberal arts or the college devoted to teaching them.

The liberal arts are religiously neutral. But this is not to condemn them. A cobbler's shop is also neutral, but I am not discaled. My remarks stem from nothing but a deep love and regard for the liberal arts tradition in which I parti-

<sup>14</sup>See George P. Schmidt, *The Liberal Arts College: A Chapter in American Cultural History* (New Brunswick: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1957).

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cipate myself as a teacher. My frequent references to Christian *learning* are also meant to express this regard. I like to feel moreover that the University or the Academy is a basic institution of Christian society. All that these precisions about the liberal arts college do in a positive way is to prepare the ground for a contention that the church-related institution may be compounding its confusions if it takes the secularized or semi-secularized liberal arts college of America (*a fortiori* the state university) as its ideal and if in the process it forgets its own calling as a Church college.

*Its calling as a Church college* — the phrase suggests my thesis that the end and function of a "Church college" are sufficiently distinguishable from those of the usual American "liberal arts college" to justify our regarding the former as essentially different, as another thing under the sun. Like other educational institutions it has its own role, a *calling*. It has a place in the educational order. It has a role or a station as does a mother in the family or a judge in the government. We do well therefore to personify the Church college in our mind's eye and dwell on that Christian doctrine of the calling that Luther did so much to revivify. He said, it will be recalled, that a cobbler answers his calling in the world by making good shoes — honestly with a firm stitch and good leather — not by sewing crosses on the toes or stuffing them with tracts. A charwoman does not make her work "Christian" by smiling incessantly or by scrubbing with a cruciform stroke but by serving her neighbor through high standards of cleanliness. In like manner the shepherds who visited the manger of the Christ-child went back to the sheep who needed their care and thus back to men who need the warmth of sheep's wool. Dietrich Bonhoeffer is right, I think, in insisting that no conception better emphasizes the Christian's responsibility for the world and his obligation to neighbor than such a conception of vocation.<sup>15</sup>

In this light we ask about the place of the Church college. It assuredly does not exist merely to provide a comfortable resort for like-minded people of a common ethnic or social or religious background. Nor is it to provide a quiet retreat from the winds of antagonistic doctrine that always blow in the world — a safe haven from reality. The Church college is fundamentally and inescapably a servant of the Church, a servant of God's people. It faces the wind. It ventures out of the haven and into the world. But it is committed nevertheless to a dual task.

One aspect of its duty parallels that of all secular institutions of higher learning: it exposes the situation in every justifiable discipline and science. This task has always been essential; but it can not be divorced from the other facet of the Church college's duty: to expose the realities of the Christian faith and creatively to relate them to the situation of the world and the needs of the Church. This

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<sup>15</sup>Gustaf Wingren, *Luther on Vocation* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1957); Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics* (London: S.C.M. Press, 1955), p. 223.

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latter task is not reserved to seminaries for training the ministry. Nor is it to be reserved for college departments of religion or Christianity, because drastic departmentalization can have the same secularizing effects as the founding of seminaries did. The actual problems in any event can not be so neatly departmentalized. No teacher and no student can escape them, and any perceptive observer will realize that the containing walls are artificial. The true Church college therefore will resolutely attack the problems incident to *both* aspects of its calling. In the irresolvable tension between them will be seen something profoundly parallel to the individual Christian's being in the world but not of it. It will recognize its obligations to the world's demands for academic excellence and the Christian demand that it wrestle with the whole gamut of the Church's problems.

But such remarks must seem inexcusably vague. "Dialectical double-talk without practical or administrative meaning," I hear someone saying. Possibly so; but I am wary of the dangers of concrete legalism. A Church college program is no more adaptable to being spelled out in black and white than an individual life. No "academic law" can be devised to solve its problems in advance. Movement toward or away from the ideal will be made through a thousand unexpected and unpredictable decisions. Yet certain goals can be suggested. They will at least clarify the "idea of a Church college."

1. The most obvious manner in which a Church college evinces its purpose has to do with its "exposure of the situation" in the physical and biological sciences, in the social sciences and history, and everywhere else. Its spirit and motivation are always conditioned, even if not determined, by the kinds of needs and problems that the community discovers to itself; but even when its analytical eye is on the Church itself, it will not view its object with the sentimentality and overweening kindness that the world, lest it offend, is wont to show. This is not to imply that the vocation of the Church college teacher is infringed, but the opposite. If an economist or a political scientist or a sociologist, he does not avert his gaze from his proper subject matter in order to study religious problems. I am even very wary of injunctions that he view his subject matter from a "Christian perspective." (If he should study church-related problems however, he would do so with Church's good in mind, which is to say, relentlessly.) If an historian, he takes seriously Ernst Troeltsch's comprehensive conception of the task: the "construction of an inter-dependent web of manifestations of the human mind which are at no point isolated and absolute . . . and which can be understood only in the context of a whole which so far as possible includes everything." There are no dogmatically determined boundaries to his endeavor nor to those of his colleagues in geology, biology, or astronomy. In its efforts to extend human knowledge or to impart it, the Church college will not violate the public ideals of science and scholarship or compromise its devotion to the whole truth. Like the cobbler it stands in judgment before the standards of its intrinsic disciplines. And like any

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other college or university it has its shortcomings exposed and put under judgment.<sup>16</sup>

2. A second manner of expressing Church college purpose relates to another major function of all education: the transmission of tradition. This task must be carried forward regardless of the continuous conflict between the duty to transmit traditional values and to criticize them — a conflict by no means restricted to any one type of school or culture.<sup>17</sup> But here again the Church college plays a special role, if it is true to itself, because it is a living part of the Christian tradition. As a tradition-bearer it actually continues the catechetical task of the Church at a mature level. Each teacher therefore is bound to consider his own intellectual life as a kind of continuous catechumenate. This assumes in the first place that the Church does have a substantive message to teach. (Seminaries are not simply technical schools in parish administration and homiletical skills; nor are candidates for the ministry the only ones worth teaching.) It also assumes that good teaching involves re-examination, reapplication, reformulation. The college thus fills its catechetical role not by assigning memory work (though that need not be eschewed altogether) but by bringing the Christian faith into a genuine dialogue with secular culture through every element of the curriculum. One of the most wondrous things about the Christian Church has been its capacity to renew itself; and one continuous source of renewal is the teacher-to-teacher and teacher-to-student transactions in which effective education consists. The Church needs the canon of relevancy provided by the student's perpetual "So what?" And from those transactions new life flows to the Church — not only through students but through the scholarship of teachers. Tradition becomes a living part of the present.

3. The foregoing discussion of tradition leads naturally to a third mode of Church college activity: that which stems from the root meaning of education,

<sup>16</sup>On Church college responsibilities for "exposing the situation" in rigorous scientific, scholarly, and analytical ways there is probably less disagreement among responsible theorists than any other. In practice everyone no doubt falls short; but there are few advocates of the view that falsehood should be propagated, half-truths purveyed, and unquestioning credulity encouraged. As to whether or not there is a "Christian" curriculum for carrying out these responsibilities or a "Christian" educational philosophy for integrating them, there is less agreement. Problems on the curriculum like those on architectural style, campus lay-out, athletic emphasis, etc., all have moral, philosophical, and theological implications, but there is no keen Christian "answer" to cut through their Gordian knotiness. To me it would seem that the contemporary growth of theological concern for the problems of Law and Gospel is as relevant to educational philosophy as the more traditional questions of Reason and Revelation or Faith and Knowledge. And it makes me at least very wary of legalism.

<sup>17</sup>See for example the discussion of "Heritage and Change" in the well-known Harvard Report, *General Education in a Free Society* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1945), Chap. II.

*to lead out.* The Church college participates in the life of the Church by accepting the responsibility which its intellectual character lays upon it. It leads of course not by taking command but by the natural authority that accrues to excellence and wisdom. Its thought gains respect because it is conceived under circumstances conducive to creation and criticism. It thus affects the Church's standards in art and music, its teachings on morals and social problems, its theology, its historical self-understanding, and countless other factors. But it does so not because it is an official arbiter but because it is bent on a collective search. Again in this search it yields nothing to the seminaries or divinity schools. Indeed the seminary needs the Church college to augment and round out its own necessarily limited efforts. Not even the largest divinity faculties could escape this need. Without the slightest excuse or occasion for rivalry or overlapping the Church college can be as important to the life of the Church as any seminary, and this completely aside from its immense direct responsibility for the nurture of the Church's future lay leadership. To a large degree its performance in this category is implicit in its exposure of the situation and its dealing with tradition. In the crucial "unscientific" realm of values where men, institutions, and communities determine what to be scientific about or what in tradition to prize, the Church college's greatest potentiality for "leading out" lies. Yet it is precisely the element of freedom that must be cherished. Aside from the inherent brashness of any such efforts, any specific prescriptions of mine would negate my whole contention.<sup>18</sup>

To show that these remarks have not been arrant pipe dreams or utopian speculations however, many examples could be cited. Nor need one refer only to thirteenth-century Paris or sixteenth-century Wittenberg or seventeenth-century Emmanuel College, Cambridge, of Puritan fame, or nineteenth-century Oriel College, Oxford, of Tractarian fame. The University of Louvain might be mentioned as a modern example. In present-day America I have made no systematic survey, sent out no questionnaires, and made no junkets aside from normal academic wanderings, actual and vicarious. Yet for me one institution has stood out as the most significant and fully realized Church college in America: St. John's University of Collegeville, Minnesota, which has fortunately published one of the best and almost certainly the most beautiful centennial histories in the annals of college publishing. From its Liturgical Press over the years have come the issues of *Worship*, carrying abroad the Benedictine spirit of liturgical reform. Father Marx's biography of Virgil Michel from the same press sets the man who was the soul of that apostolate in the context of his labors.<sup>19</sup> In like manner

<sup>18</sup>It is especially with regard to characteristics 2 and 3 that I wish to make fully explicit my recognition that the brief remarks here given are only introductory and perhaps not a little dark. As time and occasion permit, I hope to develop each of these "five points" in separate essays.

<sup>19</sup>Colman Barry, O.S.B., *Worship and Work: Saint John's Abbey and University 1856-1956* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1956); Paul B. Marx, O.S.B., *Virgil Michel and the Liturgical Movement* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1957).

## TOWARD THE IDEA OF A CHURCH COLLEGE

St. Johns has witnessed to a deepened kind of modern social awareness and a new sense of philosophical responsibility. The abbey church designed by Marcel Breuer and now under construction will soon be testifying to the aims of St. Johns in another way. Even the inventory and management of the gift shop shows devoted purpose and theological undergirding. Here is a community in other words which combines an intense sense of academic responsibility and a regard for scholarly excellence with an abiding love for the tradition of churchly learning and the need to integrate its whole work to the life and worship of the Church. Nothing incidentally would please me more than to hear that St. Johns had a dozen or a hundred rivals. Such news would indeed be a sign of promise!

4. The discussion of St. Johns leads naturally to my fourth point that the Church college can fulfill its responsibilities only if it exists as a "community of purpose." It need not be a diversified monastic foundation, but both students and teachers must know its reason for being. It must not drag out a schizophrenic existence between the fact of church-relatedness and persistent efforts to make itself over into something else. *It must truly be what it is.* It must realize the meaning of "church-relatedness" and not regard the term casually as something to account for a certain amount of financial support or given percentage of its student body. This is not the place nor am I the person to describe how a faculty, staff, and student body made up of Christian men and women is transformed into a church-oriented community of Christian endeavor. In the last analysis only actual confrontation of a given college's many problems would provide the necessary materials for such a description; and then, alas, they would apply nowhere else. But the proposition remains: it is ultimately a community consciousness, a joint awareness of responsibility, and a dedicated sense of collective purpose that signifies the existence of a Church college.

5. Finally the Church college is a worshipping community; otherwise the collective purpose will be no more than institutional loyalty or collegiate *esprit*. A well landscaped and beautifully designed chapel obviously is not enough. The altar must be at the center of its life. With full cognizance of the theological issues I am cutting across, I insist that the Church and its offices cannot be regarded as something "off-campus." Praise and thanksgiving, confession of sins and forgiveness of sins, confrontation of the redeeming Word can not be shunted out to the periphery of Church college life. We may ask furthermore — though here the practical and theological problems loom still larger — if the Sacrament of the Altar can with good conscience be kept outside the campus pale? Yet this is precisely what has generally happened. Probably nowhere have these institutions failed so resoundingly as in their daily public worship. Indeed expiation on the subject is unnecessary though it would challenge one's powers of description. Rare are the colleges where the reforming breath of the liturgical revival has been felt; and much is it needed. By no other means can the college community dedi-

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cate its powers, testify to its mission, and be strengthened for its work than through its worship of Him through Whom and in Whom all things are that are.

Churchly learning occupies a noble and vital place in the world. The Church college, whose responsibility lies in this realm, is thus an irreplaceable element in the social structures that have taken shape in our civilization. The calling of those who make it a functioning institution is vital to the Christian life and the work of the Church in the modern world. The president, deans, trustees, faculty, and students who constitute the college community have duties which can not be relegated either to seminaries or to secular colleges; they stand, as it were, on a meeting point of Christianity and Culture with unique responsibilities for mediation, interpretation, communication, and intellectual leadership. Past history with its tragic tale of academic opportunities ignominiously lost is very painful to rehearse. Our memory of America's collegiate pioneers serves to darken the contrasts. But we are grateful on the other hand that in a time of educational transition we have such substantial foundations on which to build. A profound movement of renewal in the Church colleges would deserve and receive corresponding renewal of concern and support among individuals and churches. And there is every reason for hope that in the wake of such renascence the Church colleges would write a chapter in America's educational and ecclesiastical history as vital as any yet written.

# Can America Adopt the Evangelical Academy?

FRANKLIN H. LITTELL

In spite of a name curiously forbidding in the English language, the "Evangelical Academy" of post-war Germany is becoming more and more the topic of study and discussion in churches and lay organizations in the United States. The term accurately applies to the German units in an association of lay institutes now numbering more than sixty centers in twelve European countries but is frequently used to cover the whole movement. These conference centers are not "evangelical" in the pious or "churchy" sense: the movement is "this-sided" rather than "other-worldly<sup>1</sup>." Neither are they "academies" in the formal academic sense: the true parallel would rather be the *universitas* which was a fellowship, a community of learning with life itself the measure. In spite of a certain lack of organizational logic which is typical of any living and non-bureaucratic development and in spite of a standing debate among academy directors themselves as to the exact definition of an "academy," some definite and common characteristics have emerged. Those who best know the movement are beginning to refer to it as the most significant development in adult education since the Grundtvig Folk High Schools of the nineteenth century spread throughout Scandinavia and many other areas.

As interest has grown in areas of the ecumenical movement outside Europe, the question has grown more insistent: "Is the Academy work exportable?" Although the question is falsely stated, since every transplantation of an idea or concern involves adaptation to local conditions, the fundamental question involved can be answered with a hearty affirmative. There is a good deal we can learn from the European institutes about more effective lay education and action.<sup>2</sup> Just what

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<sup>1</sup>The great men of this generation of Christian witness in Europe have been united in opposition to private piety and personal religion when accented at the expense of political and social responsibility. Of Dietrich Bonhoeffer for example the ten year memorial article in *Sonntagsblatt* (10 April 1955) commented: "There have been martyrs who called the world to the Church. Dietrich Bonhoeffer is a martyr who called the Church to the world."

<sup>2</sup>Several centers recently have been established under the United Church of Canada and the Episcopal Church of Canada. Parishfield, a center maintained by the Protestant Episcopal Church in Michigan, is a pioneering venture in the U.S.A. The United

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is unique and essential in an Academy's program, and what elements can be adapted to the American scene?

Among the most prominent of the affiliated European centers are Sigtuna (founded in 1917) and Iona (founded in 1938), but the great flowering of the movement came after World War II. The rapid and continuing establishment of new educational centers and programs is founded in a radical discontent with traditional religious and academic programs and reveals the thorough way in which some leaders have faced the fact that the most demonic modern alternatives to the Christian faith — National Socialism and Communism — developed at the ancient centers of Christendom; Rome, Moscow, Vienna, and Wittenberg. The Evangelical Academies, beginning with Bad Boll (f. 1945) and Kerk en Wereld (f. 1945), have most profoundly affected public life in those areas where the theological as well as the political crisis was taken most seriously: Germany and the Netherlands. Although roots lie deep in the Student Christian Movement between the World Wars and in Germany in the tradition of social Christianity represented by the Johannesstift in Berlin-Spandau, the experience of the Christian Resistance of the encounter with the pseudo-religions of the twentieth century has been of fundamental importance in shaping the movement.

In the encounter with violent heathenism a faithful minority rediscovered the authority of the Bible, the meaning of Christian community and discipline, the role of the whole people of God (*Laos theou*) as a witnessing body. The "precious grace" of a costly discipleship replaced the "cheap grace" of ease, comfort, and cultural satisfaction. In the words of Bonhoeffer:

Cheap grace is preaching forgiveness without penitence, baptism without church discipline, communion without confession of sin, absolution with-

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Lutheran Church has recently held a series of pilot conferences along the lines of Academy work, with the question of setting up permanent institutes left for future determination. The National Council of Churches has for several years carried publications and discussions pointing toward interdenominational action.

Especially interesting is the spread of the "Academy idea" to African and Asian "areas of rapid social change." The European *Leiterkreis* of the Evangelical Academies and Lay Institutes sponsored with the Ecumenical Study Institute at Château de Bossey, September 1-4, 1958, a meeting of academy leaders and church and educational representatives from the "younger churches." Institutes have recently been founded or are in process of formation in South Africa, Northern Rhodesia, Nigeria, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, India, etc. The new professional leaders — teachers, doctors, lawyers, civil servants, business executives, etc. — of these countries, alienated from Christianity by the missionary style, sectarian divisions, and patronage systems, have been drifting into the indifference so characteristic of the educated classes in France and Latin America. Some of their best leaders have found in the Academy approach a way to relate the faith to daily decision in a new and responsible way and asked the Department on the Laity of the World Council of Churches to set up the recent consultation.

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out personal confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, — grace without the Cross, — grace without the living, incarnated Christ.<sup>2</sup>

The miracle of an invigorated faith, which is a "Deutsche Wunder" far more important than the vaunted economic recovery, was expressed in terms which accented not individualism but the Church.<sup>4</sup>

The Evangelical Academy seeks. . . . to lift the layman out of his false position as a simple object of preaching and win him to cooperation in the concrete recognition of the right kind of church teaching and preaching.<sup>5</sup>

What the theologians had been discussing in ecumenical conferences from the time of J. H. Oldham's famous analysis at Oxford, 1937, became the salvation of the Church in adversity and the crown of the Church in the postwar period: the witness of a dedicated laity.

In the process the laity put down its roots again to the wellsprings of an active faith. The martyr, Helmuth von Moltke, wrote a friend in England as the struggle intensified:

Most important is the growing spiritual awareness, linked with the readiness, if necessary, to die. . . . Perhaps you will remember that in conversations before the war I was of the opinion that belief in God wasn't necessary in order to arrive where we now are. Today I know that I was wrong, absolutely wrong. You know that I have opposed the Nazis from the first day on, but the degree of danger and willingness to sacrifice which is required of us today and perhaps tomorrow calls for more than good ethical principles . . .<sup>6</sup>

In the struggle against a Hitler who "knew how to transpose the concept of God into a cloudy image of 'Providence' and to make it thereby totally irresponsible,"<sup>7</sup> the resisting Church rediscovered the laity, and the laymen found again the Living God. The God to whom they turned again was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob — the God of the Bible.

On the other hand the German Christians (*Deutsche Christen*), in their fealty to Hitler, proclaimed another dispensation:

<sup>2</sup>Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (London: S.C.M. Press, 1948), p. 37 f. "We Lutherans have gathered like eagles round the carcass of cheap grace, and there we have drunk of the poison which has killed the life of following Christ." *Ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>4</sup>Reinold von Thadden, "Das Ende des protestantischen Individualismus," XXVIII, *Zeitwende/Die Neue Furche* (1957), p. 159.

<sup>5</sup>Article by Eberhard Müller in Joachim Beckmann, ed., *Kirchliches Jahrbuch: 1945-48* (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann Verlag, 1950), p. 373.

<sup>6</sup>Helmuth von Moltke, *Letzte Brief aus dem Gefängnis Tegel* (Berlin: Karl H. Henssel Verlag, 1950), pp. 19-20. The Bible text of the day (*Tageslosung*) for July 20, 1944 was "If God is for us, who can be against us?"!

<sup>7</sup>Walter Conad, *Der Kampf um die Kanzeln* (Berlin: A. Topelmann, 1957), p. 9.

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The basic aim of all religious and church politics of the union must be the erection of the fifth pillar, the church, however it may be named, beside the four remaining pillars of party, government, the military, industry. They are all only functions of the nation [Volk]. From the nation they derive their justification; in their proper function they express the life of the nation.<sup>8</sup>

Quite logically the *Deutsche Christen* opposed the ecumenical movement: "A supernational and international Roman Catholic or world Protestant church life is contrary to the true political nature of Christianity."<sup>9</sup> With equal logic the resisting Christians affirmed their loyalty to the World Council of Churches in Process of Formation, repudiated confessionalist sectarianism, and denounced the Nazi attempt to substitute a "positive Christianity" of doubtful theological orientation for loyal churchmanship. Although there is general evidence that religious sentiment and sentimentality were stronger in Germany during the Third Reich than for many years,<sup>10</sup> the witnessing minority opposed "Religion" with faith: "Not religion, but revelation; *not religious community, but Church*."<sup>11</sup> In so testifying they broke with some of the fondest delusions of the nineteenth century continuum between Christianity and culture. Karl Barth had already laid out terms of reference in his *Kirchliche Opposition* 1933:

2. Because the teaching and conduct of the German Christians is nothing other than an especially powerful product of the whole late Protestant development since 1700, the protest is raised against a destructive and present corruption of the whole Evangelical Church.
3. The protest against the false teaching of the German Christians cannot be primarily on the Aryan paragraph, on the elimination of the Old Testament, on the Arianism of the German Christian Christology, on the Naturalism and Pelagianism of the German Christian teaching about justification and holiness, on the State-idolatry of the German

<sup>8</sup>Statement of July 22-23, 1941, printed in Joachim Beckmann, ed., *Kirchliches Jahrbuch: 1933-44* (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann Verlag, 1948), p. 495. The *Deutsche Christen* were founded in May 1932 by Pfarrer Hossenfelder and two others. Hossenfelder is now a prominent religious radio broadcaster for the Communist East German government.

<sup>9</sup>From the Godesberger Declaration of the *Deutsche Christen* (April 1937), published in the *KJ: 1933-44* (op. cit.), p. 283.

<sup>10</sup>Hans Buchheim, *Glaubenskrise im Dritten Reich* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1953), *passim*. This fact, plus the special predilection of the territorial and Free Church Pietists to Nazi enthusiasm, leads to interesting thoughts about the nature of the upswing of a generalized religious sentiment in the U.S.A. today.

<sup>11</sup>Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1954), p. 104. "It would be good to begin a dogmatic treatise for once not with the doctrine of God but with the doctrine of the Church, in order to make clear the inner logic of dogmatic construction." *Ibid.*, p. 90.

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Christian ethics. It must be directed fundamentally (thereby against the source of all individual errors) toward the fact that the German Christians set up beside the Bible as only source of revelation a second source of revelation: German peoplehood, its history and political present, and thereby reveal themselves as believers in "another God."<sup>12</sup>

The intolerance of Barth and his colleagues, which irritated and continues to irritate some of the more amiable and humane churchmen, was an essential protest to defend the Christian faith against a spiritualizing Religion which had sacrificed fundamental points to be agreeable to the dominant cultural and political powers. As such it helped lay the theological foundations for a new burst of witness, a new offensive to assert the Lordship of Christ the King in all areas of life.

When W. A. Visser t'Hooft brought ecumenical greetings to the first great layman's rally of postwar Germany (the founding meeting of the Kirchentag, Hannover, 1949), he was able to say:

The sign of real life in the European churches, especially during the war, is the return to the *Bible* as the source of all knowledge.<sup>13</sup>

Exclusive attention to the prophetic function of the Church can have trying consequences, as has subsequently become evident; but without it the layman's movements would never have appeared.<sup>14</sup> Out of the church struggle against demonic heathenism and vague religiosity and their representatives,<sup>15</sup> concepts grown worn and trite recovered the richness of their true meanings: God, Bible, Church, Laity.

Whether work of the Academy type can become powerful or even emerge in a situation where the continuum of a culture-religion still prevails is problematical. In fact it could be said that the two great lay movements of European Christianity — the Evangelical Academies and the Kirchentag — both are inconceivable without the conscious struggle with totalitarianism. The practice of vital witness which marks the Academies owes much to the style of leadership which can speak to Communist totalitarianism in East Germany with the same forthrightness that shocked the Nazis in 1937:

... When the state is a church and takes on the power over the souls of men and over the preaching of the Church, we are required according to Luther's word to raise resistance. And that we shall do!<sup>16</sup>

<sup>12</sup>Karl Barth zum *Kirchenkampf* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1956), p. 8.

<sup>13</sup>Message printed in Joachim Beckmann, ed., *Kirchliches Jahrbuch: 1949* (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann Verlag, 1950), p. 67.

<sup>14</sup>Cited in Martin Donath, "Kirchentag," in Friedrich Karrenberg, ed., *Evangelisches Soziallexikon* (Stuttgart: Kreuz-Verlag, 1954), col. 595.

<sup>15</sup>The Spiritualizers and the persecutors cooperated in the attempted destruction of the Church; see Chapter V in my *The Free Church* (Boston: Starr King Press, 1957).

<sup>16</sup>Printed in the *KJ: 1933-44* (*op. cit.*), p. 160.

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The spirit of Academy work is defined by the term, "encounter" (*Begegnung*). Indeed the "borderline," the "frontier" situation, continues to dominate the style of operation even where — as in the German Federal Republic — resistance to a demonic state is no longer required. The question is of course whether Academy work can develop in a culture and society where the essential discontinuity between social norms and Christian imperatives has been forgotten — as in Victorian England, Wilhelmian Germany, and large sections of "Christian America."<sup>17</sup>

The Academies did not grow out of conscientious opposition and critique alone but went ahead to emphasize "the new will of God for human beings"<sup>18</sup> as revealed in the Church as a community of witness. Relating the Church to daily life and decision where lived and made involved introducing a new practice of Christian fellowship supplementary to the badly disturbed parish structure. Alongside the geographical definition of community were developed new patterns of community and discipline — now frequently called *para-Gemeinde* (para-parish). Unfortunately some of the noblest resisters in the Confessing Church have remained permanently fixed in the Baptism of John (*Acts* 19:1-3), but the leaders of the Academies and the Kirchentag have pressed on to evidence the fruits of the Spirit.

Can the need for new forms of Christian community and discipline be established in a situation where the neighborly qualities of religion are so valued, where a healthy parish life is not only possible but widespread? Both the structural situation and the mood of American Christianity are quite different from that obtaining on the frontier of middle Europe. When Bishop Berggrav, the symbolic figure of the Norwegian resistance, emerged from imprisonment he said, "We are living again in an apocalyptic age."<sup>19</sup> This is a mood which, at least until recently, characterized neither the American people nor the major denominations in the republic. "Peace of mind" has been the goal of popular religiosity, and expansiveness the aim of church institutions.

Nevertheless there are unexploited reserves in the American scene which give some ground for cautious optimism. In fact if the major contributions of the Academies be analyzed, it will be seen that some phases of that work are already provided for in other ways in the American scene. The European institutes, the strongest of which has a staff of seventy persons and an annual operational budget of over one quarter of a million dollars per year, serve in their own setting three important functions. (1) They have taught large numbers of people how to discuss, how to conduct conferences, how to use small group methods — activities new and revolutionary on the part of the laymen in the top-heavy hierarchical

<sup>17</sup>For a fruitful discussion of the problem in America see Leonard Verduin, "Biblical Christianity and Cultural Composition," III *The Reformed Journal* (1953) 10:1-5.

<sup>18</sup>This definition of the Church is from Bonhoeffer's *Sanctorum Communio*, p. 93.

<sup>19</sup>Cited in LVII *The Expository Times* (1946) 5:140.

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structure of traditional Continental religion. (2) They have made it possible for large numbers of people excluded from continuing educational privileges by the "two-track" educational system of these countries, or by the exigencies of the war, to continue reading, studying, discussing, thinking, as literate citizens. If the Continental universities accepted a responsibility for public as well as privileged higher education, the role of the lay institutes in these countries would be quite different. These two activities are nothing new to the American churches however and afford little for us to copy or adapt. Lay discussion and participation is an old thing in American religious life, and our best universities have for long carried great extension programs in the field of adult education.

It is at a third point that the institutes have developed something quite unique. They began in 1945-46 with two facts: a) the demoralization of professional groupings and classes — doctors, lawyers, teachers, civil servants, and so on, having betrayed professional ethics and morals to Nazi interests; b) the fact that "community" in the modern industrial world is no longer primarily a geographical relationship but rather a professional and sociological concept.<sup>20</sup> The average parish thinks of its work and the average pastor is trained to work in terms which are no longer relevant: in terms of neighborhood relations in a vanished agrarian economy. The *para-parish* developed by the Academies included the Christian cell group of laborers in the factory, the guild of Christian lawyers, the fellowship of Christian civil servants — groups parallel to and supplementary to the parish structure which learned to think of their role and social function simultaneously in terms of professional commitments and standards and of Biblical imperatives.

This renewed articulation of the layman's *Beruf/vocatio/calling/vocation*/professional commitment has the power to turn Christian social action from ineffective moralism to action of far-reaching effect. The restatement of a teaching basic to the Reformation of the sixteenth century, it is grounded in awareness that mere verbiage and good intentions are nothing, that history is carried not by ideas but by the word which has become flesh.<sup>21</sup> In this the Academy work can call those Americans who have ears to hear away from the swamps of individual piety and mysticism (coupled with cultural accommodation) to a power of witness which was once the very genius of the Free Churches: the testimony of the community of disciples informed by the Bible, disciplined in brotherly liability one for the other, led and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

<sup>20</sup>See Eberhard Müller, *Die Welt ist anders geworden* (Hamburg: Furche Verlag, 1953), p. 13 f.; also Section VI of W. A. Visser t'Hooft, ed., *The Evanston Report, 1954* (London: S.C.M. Press, 1955).

<sup>21</sup> For a modern social scientist's formulation of the ancient Christian protest against Idealism, see Chapter IV of Kurt Lewin, *Resolving Social Conflicts* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1948). The concept of *Beruf* stands in contrast to vapid generalizations: God wants a definite person to do definite things. Emil Brunner, *Das Gebot und die Ordnungen* (Zürich: Zwingli-Verlag, 1939), 4th edition, Section 20.

## Mysteries Great and Small

JOHN O. MELLIN

I want you, as a kind of uniformed policeman, to join with me, a civilian private eye, as we attempt to unravel some very interesting facts which have come to me — facts which need some interpreting and some relating. I have never been enamored of detective fiction. For relaxation I turn to the shop with its band saw and planer. But someone has to work this mystery through. The facts seem to fall into a pattern. With the badge of authority represented by you listeners, we may be safe to pursue our investigation.

It all began when I became a third assistant at The First Presbyterian Church in the City of New York. My chief, Dr. Julius V. Moldenhawer, had a fabulous library. Of course it was mostly literature related to Old England. "No theology which isn't good literature is worth reading," he used to say to me. "All these modern novels are trash," he repeated on several occasions. "Here's the library key, John. Read at your leisure."

I never seemed to have any leisure, but I did spend time in the library looking at the titles. It pays to be able to converse a bit intelligently with your employer. The library reflected Dr. Moldenhawer's values. Everything seemed to be collectors' items from the past or interpretations and appraisals of English literature. It came as a great shock one afternoon therefore to discover four shelves of books in a little room off from the main study. Here was a magnificent collection of what to my untutored mind would have been complete trash — shelf after shelf of detective fiction right out of the most recent crime clubs. I kept this secret and pondered it in my heart.

Some time later I fell in with the C. S. Lewis fad. I read all his works. The other-worldly mysteries of *Perelandra* and *Out of the Silent Planet* with their theological interpretations and insights fascinated me. Someone told me later that C. S. Lewis wrote detective fiction straight under another name.

My wife brought to my attention the same year the better mystery novels, as they were called, of Graham Greene. Two of his titles of special interest to me were *Brighton Rock* and *The Ministry of Fear*. It was said by reviewers, who supposedly knew, that Graham Greene was a Catholic convert and that his works reflected his theological insights, thus deepening the understanding of the realities of sin and grace for the popular reader.

Then someone lent to me a book by Charles Williams, *War in Heaven*. The first sentence began, "The telephone was ringing wildly, but without result, since

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there was no one in the room but the corpse." Later in *Theology Today* I discovered a review article on Charles Williams written by Robert McAfee Brown. He said Williams wrote spiritual shockers or "murder mysteries set in eternity." Brown added that Williams was in a sense the spiritual father of such writers as T. S. Eliot, W. H. Auden, C. S. Lewis, and Dorothy Sayers.

Dorothy Sayers! Now there's a name in the mystery story field. Her *Busman's Holiday* is a classic. Her Lord Peter Wimsey is a detective *par excellence*. In my own library I had other works of Dorothy Sayers however — *Begin Here*, and *Unpopular Opinions*. But these books were on theological subjects!

One Christmas Dr. Moldenhawer gave me a work by G. K. Chesterton called *Orthodoxy*. Who has not used Chesterton's quips as sermon illustrations? But all the Chesterton which Dr. Moldenhawer had on his shelves were Father Brown mysteries! There seemed to me to be a kind of trend here in the relationship between theology and mystery stories. I mentioned this in passing to a friend. The idea didn't seem to intrigue him very much. He did volunteer the information however that Dr. James Moffatt was supposed to have published a mystery novel under a pen name.

I couldn't let go of the facts which were building up into a case. It seemed that there was an integral relationship between an addiction to detective fiction and an appreciation of theology. There were first those ministers and theologians who collected mystery novels. There were others like Sayers and Chesterton who wrote mysteries and theology. Then there were those like Greene who authored detective fiction, filling it with Christian theological concepts. Finally, there were men like Lewis and Williams who wrote these kinds of "mystery stories set in eternity." Detectives have moved ahead with fewer clues than this. I began to seek out some reasons for this affinity.

It seems to me that there are four categories within which the relationship can be explained. First, both interests are involved in a search for meaning; second, both demand a kind of humanizing imagination above and beyond the simple categories of logic; third, both interests require a complete understanding of human nature; last, the experience of necessity exists in each symbolized by the chase.

### I. Meaning

Consider first the category of meaning.

We love mystery stories not because we enjoy continual bafflement. We love them because life itself is so baffling in its many aspects that it is relaxing to sit down and work *some* mysteries through to a conclusion. Perhaps there is a sense in which we sublimate our uncertainty concerning the great problems of life in the enjoyment of solving the little ones. Contrived plots fall away rather easily when all the facts are in.

The mystery of existence is not so easily solved. Here all the facts are never

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in the life-span of one man. In living we must make decisions of life and death before the case is closed. We live in a continual mystery. Life remains baffling for many people because they are unable to find the clue by which the facts of life are interpreted.

In the second chapter of I Corinthians, we read:

But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom,  
which God ordained before the world unto our glory;  
Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it,  
they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

*I Corinthians 2:7-8*

St. Paul, writing to the church in the pagan city of Corinth, was offering the clue to the mystery of existence. He said the clue was in Jesus Christ and the meaning of the Cross. Hellenic learning and primitive cults had a heavy influence in Corinth. Many of the church members were nominal Christians but felt that the assumptions of Greek philosophy prepared them for membership. They displayed a kind of intellectual arrogance which discounted the witness of the Cross and the preaching of Paul. It was Paul's contention that they overlooked the clue to all knowledge and therefore were wise only after the wisdom of this world. He offered a higher wisdom which opened up real insight into the nature and purpose of God necessary for a complete life. In other words Paul, a kind of ecclesiastical detective, interpreted the facts of life after the mind of Christ. He closed the case on the affirmation of the sovereignty of God and of God's love for mankind.

### II. *Creative Imagination*

We come to the second category of likeness between good detective fiction and good theology, the marriage of logic and creative imagination. Theology does not despise logic nor does it worship it. The discipline of logic is used as a method to advance the insights of inspiration, revelation, and even experience which is often most unreasonable.

The rigorous logic of Calvinism lacked the warmth which was life and life abundant. As it became inhuman, it became unreal. So Dr. Moldenhawer could maintain that theology which wasn't also good literature was worthless.

In detective fiction there is always a character with a literal mind who is wed to the obvious. He is not illogical. Far from it. He is too sure. What he lacks is imagination. He is most often symbolized as the uniformed policeman in contrast to the civilian detective. This character is usually used by the author to reflect our universal skepticism concerning vested temporal authority. The logic of this character is always persuasive, but his reasoning inevitably leads the reader to the wrong conclusion. So in terms of religious faith there are persons

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who can dispel all wonder to the extent of describing the temperature of hell and the furniture of heaven.

How often in our parish experience we have found our scientists more "fundamentalist" than our poets and other friends of the liberal arts persuasion.

In good theology as in good detective fiction the creative imagination tempers the rigors of a too simple scientific logic and reason.

Dorothy Sayers, eminent writer in both fields, writes:

.... A utilitarian age of narrowly scientific outlook has contrived to cast (discredit) upon the creative imagination. "God," said Berdyaev, "created the world by imagination." "Poets," said Percy Bysshe Shelly, "are the unacknowledged legislators of the world." But God and poets are not liked by the Vested Interests and the Economic Groups, any more than by dictators. They have an unpleasant way of stimulating searching inquiry into meanings and motives, and it pays better to push them away into water tight compartments, where their dangerous habit of synthetizing human activities can exert no control on public affairs.<sup>1</sup>

The searching inquiry into meanings and motives is what makes a good detective. It also makes a good theologian. The theologian is a kind of poet in the laboratory of the world. Each scientific laboratory has about it some of the excitement of detective fiction. There is all the stimulation which goes with the discovery, analysis and interpretation of facts. The police laboratory is indispensable to mystery solving too. That no two snowflakes are alike is interesting but that no two fingerprints are alike leads to the solving of crime. In a police laboratory there is a purpose. Who did it? Who is involved?

In the purely scientific laboratory often the "investigators" stop short of asking the question, Who is involved? Such experiments may assemble and relate the meaning of facts, but the larger question posed — Who did it? What is the purpose? What is the ultimate meaning? — is not asked or answered. So a profound mystery remains in the midst of all scientific discovery.

The theologian is willing to push his questioning through to the conclusions of the Old Testament. "In the beginning God," and of the New Testament, "God so loved the world."

### III. *Human Nature*

The third category of likeness between theology and detective fiction is in the need for a deep and accurate understanding of human nature. William Lyon Phelps once said that one who lives in New York and knows the Bible knows all

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<sup>1</sup>*Begin Here*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, p. xi.

### THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

there is to know about human nature. To solve a crime a detective must know human nature. Christianity gives us our deepest insight into it. A romanticist does not make a good detective because he underestimates the depths to which a man can go. A cynic could not do good work because he would not be able to anticipate the possible heights of sacrifice and devotion which rest within the human breast. The Christian knows both possibilities. The wisdom of this world dismisses the innocence of the Christian as ignorance, and on this assumption it falls.

G. K. Chesterton brings this out in one of his mystery stories. Flambeau, the great French criminal, makes this grave mistake of "innocence equals ignorance" when he tries to outwit simple little Father Brown. Flambeau is seeking to steal from Father Brown a jade cross wrapped in a brown paper cover. He is dressed like a priest in order to fool Father Brown. The climax of the story comes when he leads the little priest far out in the moors to do away with him. The following conversation ensues: Flambeau says:

"Really, you're as good as a three-act farce. Yes, you turnip, I am quite sure. I had the sense to make a duplicate of the right parcel, and now, my friend, you've got the duplicate and I've got the jewels. An old dodge, Father Brown — a very old dodge."

"Yes," said Father Brown, and passed his hand through his hair with the same strange vagueness of manner. "Yes, I've heard of it before." The colossus of crime leaned over to the little rustic priest with a sort of sudden interest.

"*You* have heard of it?" he asked. "Where have *you* heard of it?" "Well, I mustn't tell you his name, of course," said the little man simply. "He was a penitent, you know. He had lived prosperously for about twenty years entirely on duplicate brown paper parcels. And so, you see, when I began to suspect you, I thought of this poor chap's way of doing it at once."

"Began to suspect me?" repeated the outlaw with increased intensity. "Did you really have the gumption to suspect me just because I brought you up to this bare part of the heath?"

"No, no," said Brown with an air of apology. "You see, I suspected you when we first met. It's that little bulge up the sleeve where you people have the spiked bracelet."

"How in Tartarus," cried Flambeau, "did you ever hear of the spiked bracelet?"

"Oh, one's little flock, you know!" said Father Brown, arching his eyebrows rather blankly. "When I was a curate in Hartlepool, there were three of them with spiked bracelets. So, as I suspected you from the first, don't you see, I made sure that the cross should go safe, anyhow.

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I'm afraid I watched you, you know. So at last I saw you change the parcels. Then don't you see, I changed them back again. And then I left the right one behind." <sup>2</sup>

Christian innocence is not simple innocence. It is innocence lost and regained! Such was the theme of Milton's great epics (*Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*).

The best detectives and the best ministers are "shock proof." They know what is in the mind of men from experience. The best line is "One's little flock, you know!" What an education an intimate knowledge of the flock can be! The "Confessional," formal or informal, brings the minister very close to the heart of mankind.

Perhaps the first great mystery plot in the world attempting to solve the problem of human nature is in the book of Genesis, where the writer seeks to explain the fact that man is a child of God yet separated by his sinfulness from the Source of his creation. It is the story of our wandering and our lostness. Our Lord Christ has set the way back to innocence by relating our wills to his. He is the clue of life and reality. With imagination and insight the worldly detectives work. With religious imagination and spiritual insight the facts of life are interpreted into meaningful existence through a knowledge of God and the understanding of Jesus. In the Gospel of John we read:

But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men. And needed not that any should testify of man; for he knew what was in man.

*St. John 2: 24-25*

His searching knowledge of our hearts is what has caused us to respect him at a distance or to come to him as Lord and Savior. He interprets us to ourselves and solves for us our greatest mystery. "He knew what was in man."

Paul spoke of now seeing through a mirror darkly but later seeing face to face. "Then shall I know," he said, "even as also I am known." This is at the end of life. In life, before all the facts are in, we live in faith in Jesus Christ who knows us better than we know ourselves.

The detective, Father Brown, was once offered an award for being the greatest detective in the world because of his "second sight." The idea horrified the little priest and he replied:

No man is really good until he knows how bad he is or might be, till he's realized how much right he has to all this snobbery and sneering, and talking about criminals as if they were apes in a forest ten thousand miles

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<sup>2</sup>"The Blue Cross" in *Father Brown Omnibus*, pp. 20-21.

### THE CHRISTIAN SCHOLAR

away; till he's squeezed out of his soul the last drop of the oil of the Pharisees; till his only hope is somehow or other to have captured one criminal, and kept him safe and sane under his own hat.\*

Father Brown was right. There is no second sight needed to understand life. There is the Christian interpretation of man. It is part of the mystery of the kingdom of God that we ourselves must be captured.

#### IV. *The Chase*

There is another way in which life is akin to a mystery novel and reality to detective fiction. Both involve a chase. Most of us are continually running from something. We feel there is something to hide. In psychology much space is given to the discussion of "defences." In modern life we change our cars and dress and even our spouses with regularity in a kind of effort to keep ahead of our pursuer through speed or disguise. We all wear masks to fool 'even ourselves. "Hypocrite" comes from the Greek word meaning one who wears an actor's mask and plays a part on a stage.

We all know the story of the clergyman who received a telegram in his study just before churhtime one Sunday. It read, "Flee, all is found out." It was the most unnerving experience he had ever undergone. Later he found it was sent as a joke by a friend with whom he had discussed some intimate soul-searching, some doubts perhaps, the night before. There was nothing articulate he had done. It is just that "all" is such an inclusive word. We wear masks — every one of us.

So there is a chase. God who is Truth pursues us all. We either face ourselves and Him or we run from Reality. But from Him there is no escape. Francis Thompson in the "Hound of Heaven" points the experience.

The psalmist also speaks of the inescapable God.

Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?

If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.

*Psalm 139: 7-8*

But the Gospel of good news turns this "hounding experience" into positive salvation. In Jesus Christ too we learn that the search is on. This is what the Gospel means. It is the good news that God is seeking us. A man rescued after many days at sea in a rubber boat said, "My only hope was that I knew I was being sought." What did Jesus say of God our Father? Here are the clues as recorded by Luke.

\*G. K. Chesterton, *The Secret of Father Brown*, p. 13.

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What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?

*St. Luke 15: 4*

[Either] what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it?

*St. Luke 15: 8*

Then there is the story of the certain man with two sons. The seeking God Jesus announced, but one seeking in love.

What a wonderful answer to our current insecurity for those who are hounded on all sides, those who seek the answer to the riddle of life. God comes to us in love. He seeks us out in love. The whole Gospel message is that when we surrender the chase is over and true life can begin. Then life unfolds with meaning. All mystery is not then gone. But enough knowledge is given to live life and live it abundantly.

It seems natural therefore that such interests should be found together in the minds and imaginations of the people we have considered. Good theology is like good detective work in the search of meaning, in the use of creative imagination, in the understanding of human nature, and in the appreciation of the chase. Appreciation of both disciplines gives us an understanding of life — not the whole story, but enough to make sense of it all.

Neither fires of hell nor golden streets of heaven are necessary for understanding the mystery of the kingdom of God. Hell we know in our "hounded" existence. Heaven we experience when we are discovered by God's love. This is enough for life. This is our salvation. With this key the mystery of existence is unlocked.

But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory;  
Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

# The Lecomte du Noüy Foundation Award

to

**Professor Michael Polanyi**

On November 17, 1959 Professor Michael Polanyi was presented an award by the Lecomte du Noüy Foundation for his two recent books, *Personal Knowledge* and *The Study of Man*. These books are concerned with problems of human knowledge from the standpoint of science as well as of philosophy. Professor Polanyi, trained originally in medicine, then pursued the discipline of chemistry and has come in recent years to a predominant concern with philosophical inquiry. He was for many years a member of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Physical Chemistry in Berlin and subsequently Professor of Physical Chemistry in the University of Manchester, conducting researches, the merits of which were recognized by his election to the Royal Society and by honorary doctorates from the universities of Aberdeen, Princeton, and Leeds. In 1948 he exchanged a chair of Physical Chemistry in the University of Manchester for a chair in Social Studies in the same university. Following his appointment as Gifford Lecturer in the University of Aberdeen, Professor Polanyi undertook the scope of inquiry which led to the two books for which the Lecomte du Noüy award was made to him. He is now Senior Research Fellow in Merton College, Oxford University.

With a number of the trustees and members of the selection committee of the Lecomte du Noüy Foundation as well as additional guests in attendance, Madame Mary Lecomte du Noüy made the Foundation's presentation. We present here three brief statements made on that occasion.

## I

**DR. GEORGE N. SHUSTER**

*President, Hunter College*

I trust my revered colleagues of the Lecomte du Noüy Foundation, who are responsible for the selection of a book concerned with the general area of knowledge which so deeply interested the distinguished scientist for whom the Foundation is named as it has his noble co-worker and wife, will pardon me if I say that they are as difficult to please as is a lady in quest of a new hat. The scientists among them can detect a non-scientific remark with the deadly accuracy which is characteristic, I am told, of Geiger counters. The philosophers and theologians on the other hand sniff the aroma of what from their point of view is second-rate

#### THE LECOMTE DU NOÜY FOUNDATION AWARD FOR 1959

with what, if I were not a reverent citizen, I should term devilish skill. And finally there are those who cherish good writing and will not be dissuaded from their insistence on commendable prose.

This afternoon is therefore in a way a tribute to Professor Michael Polanyi, who has come a long way to be with us and to receive the Lecomte du Noüy Award. We are delighted that in this way we can honor him. But we should like above all to acknowledge our indebtedness to him. Many books published during the past two years have been very good indeed. We have read not a few of them with varying degrees of appreciation. But the author whom we are honoring has us all very deeply in his debt for intellectual enrichment the memory of which will be cherished. Professor Polanyi has offered us not one book but two — the first, a philosophical essay of vast scope and remarkably intense concentration of thought, entitled *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy*; the second bearing the designation, *The Study of Man*, which by reason of a miracle of compression restates the principal conclusions reached in *Personal Knowledge* but does so in a way which endows it with independent value and stature. For these two contributions to the best thought of mankind the Award is being given.

What shall I say very briefly about them in behalf of my colleagues of the Board? Perhaps two texts will help. The last sentence Simone Weil wrote in her notebook before she died was, "The most important part of education — to teach the meaning of *to know* (in the scientific sense)." These words point clearly enough to one aspect of the discipline of this notable mystic. The second text is from a new book by the noble scholar we honored last year — William Ernest Hocking: "For each thinker, the ultimate authority must be his own vision, through his own encounter with the reality at work in the facts — and he must find it there!" The very great value of the books Professor Polanyi has written seems to me to grow out of his long wrestling with these two things — the basic need, felt so strongly though often enough erratically in our time, for knowing what *to know* means, and the equally inescapable truth that personal vision is the "ultimate authority." But probably since he is an able scientist his struggle has a genuine and quite impressive serenity. He has not sought to cope with the enemy by fits and starts but with persistent caution, care, and strength.

We have certainly been in grave danger lest, in acquiring a quite overwhelming amount of scientifically-arrived-at knowledge about things, we end by identifying ourselves with those things. And in like manner we seemed likely to lose the power of communication which resides in the use of a common intellectual language. Thus we have been given to say that the language of intuition is alien to that of logic and that the words spoken by the artist do not come from that part of the linguistic ark which the scientists frequent. Now Professor Polanyi has proposed the concept of a unity of both reality and language which could not have been envisioned in an earlier stage of intellectual development. I shall say no more than that this, which has a definite kinship with the thought of Père Teilhard du

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Chardin, seems to furnish a new vantage point from which to see the place of man in the world. It seems to us not unreasonable to say in addition that herewith a notable blow has been struck for the freedom of the human spirit. Perhaps it is no mere coincidence that Professor Polanyi is of Hungarian descent.

We commend these books and their author with confident admiration and affection with which a scholar greets another in the light of whatever discipline he may profess.

### II

Professor RALPH W. G. WYCKOFF

*Departments of Bacteriology and Physics  
University of Arizona*

It is for me a personal pleasure to say a few words in introducing Professor Polanyi. As chemists we met more than thirty years ago in Berlin through a concern with the same field of research. Though we have both in the intervening years become interested in other things, I have found it instructive to follow, from this common point of departure, the evolution of his thought and work.

We are of that generation which was brought up to see in physical science a new pattern of inquiry which ultimately would be extended to encompass all of human experience; but we were also of a time that was beginning to suspect the adequacy of this approach, at least perceiving that a thorough knowledge of the inorganic world would not provide a genuine understanding of life.

Current science has reacted by developing a new concern with biology and medicine. This extension to the phenomena of life of our deepening analysis of the fine structure of matter has produced a flourishing biochemistry and is gradually giving rise to a biophysics that will complement it. Those who continue the mechanistic tradition tend to be satisfied by this pursuit of the strictly causal relationships between phenomena. Others, evidently including Professor Polanyi, feel that the hierarchy of organization manifested by life and the sense of purpose that all organization brings with it call for a wider search for the true relation between natural science based on sensory experience and that rest of experience whose cultivation must seem to the non-materialist man's deeper opportunity. In such a wider search the precise modes of thought which science has developed have an essential place. This scientific method is a technique which like other techniques can be acquired only through its exercise; for this reason the scientifically trained are needed. Professor Polanyi is one of the very few in my generation to apply his scientific mind to this inquiry. For such a mind it is as bold an adventure as the investigation of the atom and no less difficult.

Many will assert that it is even more vital to the future of mankind. Lecomte du Noüy certainly felt this, and Polanyi's writings clearly indicate that he does too. This commonality of goal makes it pre-eminently fitting that he should receive the

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Lecomte du Noüy Award. I am grateful for a chance to reinforce the intellectual judgment of the committee of which I am a member with my own more personal congratulations and with the hope that Professor Polanyi may have many more years to devote to the essential task which he has already so effectively furthered.

III

Professor MICHAEL POLANYI

*Senior Research Fellow, Merton College  
Oxford University*

I am happy to be here today at this moment in this company for this occasion. I am sure that you are all tired of references to America's youthfulness. But I can't help recalling here today those endless hours of discussion with my friends half a century ago as young men, as schoolboys or university students. We thought about things then with such earnestness as we perhaps never again have in later life. Our interest was not derived from any professional activity; it was not aimed at making a contribution to literature by articles for a particular journal or books for a particular audience. Our interest was absolute, a pure concern with our subject — and that subject was the whole world.

I have been often asked why I gave up my work in chemistry in favor of economics, sociology, philosophy, and the like. The answer is really quite simple: a desire to go back to normal. We all started with being interested in the whole world; it is the only genuine interest one can have.

But how difficult it is to do what is obviously necessary! How rarely can we even perceive it, and having perceived it for a moment, how difficult it is to keep our eyes fixed on it. And this is why I am grateful to you for this day, for your company, and for the occasion on which we are meeting here. Because together we can keep in mind firmly the decisive questions of which singly we would tend to lose sight. And I cannot help feeling that nowhere, nowhere in the world, would one find such company today outside America. This blessed idea, so absurd and yet so obviously sensible, that we must try to settle here and now the most important matters concerning man (though current among young men and women everywhere) is abhorred by adults in countries with a more highly bureaucraticized intellectual life. You can find it perhaps cultivated here and there in India, but the only real home of this naive enterprize today is America. Here it is being cultivated boldly and widely and with the full equipment of every technical proficiency. Here you find a hearing for it in universities and support for it by generous foundations.

You have kindly appreciated my efforts in this direction, so let me say a word about the strategy of such efforts as I see it. In the days when religious dogma

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controlled all knowledge, religious dogma was a source of many errors. Today the scientific outlook exercises predominant control over all knowledge, and science has become the greatest single source of popular fallacies. This is not to denigrate science. Scientific genius has extended man's intellectual control over nature far beyond previous horizons. By secularizing man's moral passions, scientific rationalism has evoked a movement of reform which in the last hundred and fifty years has improved almost every human relationship, both public and private. A rationalist concern for welfare and for an educated and responsible citizenship has created an active mutual concern among millions of previously submerged and isolated individuals. Scientific rationalism has indeed been the main guide to intellectual, moral, and social progress since the idea of progress first gained popular acceptance about a hundred and fifty years ago.

But unfortunately the ideals of science are nonsensical. Current biology is based on the assumption that you can explain the processes of life in terms of physics and chemistry. And of course physics and chemistry are both to be represented ultimately in terms of the forces acting between atomic particles. So all life, all human beings, and all works of man including Shakespeare's sonnets and Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* are also to be so represented. The ideal of science remains what it was in the time of Laplace: to replace all human knowledge by a complete knowledge of atoms in motion. In spite of much that is said to the contrary, quantum mechanics makes no difference at all in this respect. A quantum mechanical theory of the universe is just as empty of meaning as a mechanical theory.

This is the heart of the matter. This is the origin of the whole system of scientific obscurantism under which we are suffering today. This is why we corrupt the conception of man, reducing him either to an insentient automaton or to a bundle of appetites. This is why science denies us the possibility of acknowledging personal responsibility. This is why science can be invoked in support of totalitarian violence. Why science has become, as I have said before, the greatest source of dangerous fallacies today.

The question is: Can we get rid of all this terrible nonsense without jettisoning the beneficial guidance which science still offers us in other respects? I think this is extremely difficult. That is why it has not yet been done. For dissatisfaction with the blatant absurdities of the scientific approach is widespread and efforts to remedy the situation are not infrequent. Yet they remain on the whole ineffectual.

But this will not remain so. The time will come when these scattered efforts will coalesce to a coherent movement of thought and then it will make rapid progress. That is why a union of minds, such as the Lecomte du Nouy Foundation is fostering, is eminently useful. It brings together independent initiatives and makes them conscious of forming the nucleus of a reformed scientific outlook. I gratefully acknowledge for my part the moral support which I have received on this memorable occasion.

## Books and Publications

### Technology and the Academics

Just over ten years ago Sir Walter Moberly's *The Crisis in the University* was published in the U.S.A. Although written explicitly in terms of the British situation, the book proved to be of surprising value to American students and faculty members alike. The reception of the book by the university public on this side of the Atlantic confirmed the British judgment: Sir Walter's classical and philosophical scholarship, together with his wealth of administrative experience in university, church, and state, had made possible a volume whose influence would last for years. I venture to suggest that the volume under review could prove in many respects even more relevant for all those who are seriously concerned with the issues confronting American higher education. Would that its author, Sir Eric Ashby, had been able to work out his insights as completely as Moberly did in his larger volume!

Sir Eric Ashby is a botanist of international reputation who left Manchester University a few years ago to become the head of Queen's University, Belfast. In July 1959 he left Ireland for Cambridge to take up residence as President of Clare College. The singular value of his book is that, just as Moberly's book was the product of a mind steeped in the classical tradition of the Oxford University, so *Technology and the Academics* is the product of a mind which is steeped in the equally significant scientific tradition of the British universities. Like Moberly, Ashby writes from an unusually wide academic and administrative experience. Educated at the University of London and in the U.S.A. on a Commonwealth Fellowship, he was a professor for some years at Sydney University in Australia when he also served as counsellor of the Australian legation in Moscow, an experience which provided first hand basis for his excellent Pelican Book, *Scientist in Russia*, which still remains (so far as my knowledge goes) the most useful single book on science in the Soviet Union.

The material in the volume under review originally was given as the Ballard-Matthews lectures at the University College of North Wales. These lectures however in their published form have been supplemented and enriched by material from articles which appeared in sources as wide as the *University of Toronto Quarterly* and the *Journal of the Institute of Metals*. As Ashby proceeds in his task of exploring the fashion in which science and technology became accepted within the British university tradition, his book shows not only his personal command — as a first rate scientist — of what this tradition now means, but it exhibits a

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Sir Eric Ashby, *Technology and the Academics*. London: Macmillan and Company, 1958, 118 pages.

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rare understanding of both the sociology<sup>1</sup> and the history of a movement which in less than a century completely transformed the British university scene. It was not only that when the nineteenth century opened the only universities in England were Oxford and Cambridge whereas by the time that the following century was a little more than a few years old universities had also been founded at London, Durham, Manchester, Leeds, Liverpool, Birmingham, and Bristol, but also that the whole character of the ancient universities was also being transformed to the point that by 1921 the first alumnus of Oxford (the home of classical and literary learning), Frederick Soddy, had been awarded a Nobel Prize for chemistry.

Ashby delineates clearly this transition with perceptive skill. It is however in a chapter with the telling title "Split Personality in Universities," and when he begins to reflect upon the results of this process, that he becomes most illuminating for those of us who are concerned with the American scene. In essence his thesis is that the university has not seriously come to terms with its diverse functions which it has accumulated over the centuries.

From Bologna and Salerno comes the function of the university to train students for certain professions, like the church, medicine, and law. From Oxford and Cambridge comes the university's function as a nursery for gentlemen, statesmen, and administrators. From Göttingen and Berlin comes the function of the university as a centre for scholarship and research. From Charlottenburg and Zürich and Massachusetts comes the function of the university to be a staff college for technological experts and specialists. Some of these functions were created by the scientific revolution; others were deeply influenced by it. The universities have responded to all of them and repudiated none; but adaptation is by no means complete. Form is not everywhere fitted to function. Indeed the cardinal problem facing universities today is how to reconcile these four different functions in one and the same institution.

That an attempt is being made to deal with what Ashby rightly calls the cardinal problem is illustrated for us in America in a peculiar fashion. Our state teachers colleges and our technical colleges are becoming more like "universities" while the latter in their turn are becoming more and more a conglomeration of professional schools. Yet in terms of the categories of any serious discussion and thought, these developments only reveal the wide ramifications of the problem; they do not solve it. We shall get nowhere until we can recognize with Ashby that the century-old antithesis between science and the humanities is still at the heart of the problem. The point where Ashby is illuminating is that he shows decisively that the current dichotomy between specialization and liberal education is essentially the same antithesis but in more modern dress. Here, in terms of a

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<sup>1</sup>As is natural to a biologist, Ashby prefers the word "ecology."

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shrewd distinction between science and technology, he persuasively presents the novel idea that a proper understanding of technology is the key to our predicament — the plight of the humanities! Hence, so he argues, the path to an understanding of human culture is not one that by-passes a student's specialism (whatever it may be — engineering or medicine) but one that goes *through* it. He is not daunted by the difficulties inherent in such a revolutionary position. With considerable boldness he takes as his example brewing!

Suppose a student decides to take up the study of brewing: his way to acquire general culture is not by diluting his brewing courses with popular lectures on architecture, social history, and ethics, but by making brewing the core of his studies.

Skillfully he shows how such an approach can bring the student face to face with all for which disciplines such as architecture, Egyptology, ethics, religion, and sociology stand. Such a position is clearly one fraught with grave dangers; but one concludes a reading of this book with the same feeling about its author that Max Weber had about Karl Marx: "Where Marx is mistaken is more important than where everybody else is right."

ARNOLD S. NASH

#### The Sociological Imagination

C. Wright Mills' recent book, *The Sociological Imagination*, raises the question of what social scientists are doing and what they should be doing. To this extent the scope of the book is parochial and will be of interest primarily to the trade. The problems raised about social science however have broader implications for the role of intellectuals in American society.

When one sees what the author is for, his selection of targets for attack becomes somewhat clearer. He is convinced that bureaucratic forms of life are dominant today and threaten to turn men, if they have not done so already, into Cheerful Robots. The alienated man, an instrument and object of rational organizations, poses a threat to reason and freedom as continuing values in American society. In terms of publics this is the threat of dissolution to democratic society as fact and aspiration. The new kinds of social structure arising in the post-modern Fourth Epoch have placed a question mark over the intrinsic relation between rationality and freedom. These structures have outmoded both liberal and Marxian interpretations. The formulation of the troubles and problems raised by the crises of reason and freedom requires a grasp of social structures within

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C. Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1959, 234 pages, \$6.00.

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historical perspectives and an appreciation of the variety of milieux. It is the promise and potential of social science, in the classic tradition of Marx, Sombart, Weber, Comte, Spencer, Durkheim and Veblen, that it will work seriously, consistently, and imaginatively at this task of formulating problems. So far as its work is imaginative and brings clarity to the history-making process, it will amplify reason and extend freedom.

The author gives several summary translations of his position which make his proposals even clearer. The social sciences should be about man and society. Man is an historical being with a past and a future. Therefore social science cannot by definition be ahistorical in approach. Thus biography and history and the connections of the two in a variety of social structures are the actual subject matter of a responsible social science. "All classic social scientists have been concerned with the salient characteristics of their time — and the problem of how history is being made within it; with 'the nature of human nature' — and the variety of individuals that come to prevail within their periods."

He attacks GRAND Theory in the person of Talcott Parsons. He considers GRAND Theory "drunk on syntax" and "blind to Semantics." It is a fetishizing of Concepts in the name of some kind of universal model. He then takes up Abstracted Empiricism or the Method which is the processing of quantified data about narrow segments of behavior through the statistical ritual. Ideas, conceptions, meanings, and relevance are secondary to the suitability of the data for the Method if the final product can be dressed up with a memo on "historical background."

The common element in the two targets of attack — GRAND Theory and the Method — is their focus on ahistorical, structured uniformities. Both approaches are serious attempts to develop the scientific aspect of social science if by science one means a disciplined organization of knowledge about a field of phenomena. Talcott Parsons' definition of social science is much more inclusive than that current among the technicians of the Method, but his system is similarly directed toward formulae under which a variety of instances can be subsumed. C. Wright Mills is countering these scientific models with human variety, freedom, historical specificity, and the significance of reason in history-making. He is not content with a freedom which is the consequence of knowledgeable bowing to inevitabilities. He is suspicious of the values which inform such static models and divert attention from the operations of power. He is also suspicious of the administrative bureaucrat who supervises the method and transforms the aspiring social scientists into technicians. The bureaucratic ethos in social science is in this perspective an inevitable consequence of detachment from historical process in Grand Theory and detachment from substantive problems in the Method. Since Grand Theory is not generally understood, its ideological implications for the *status quo* have not been tapped. The

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enormous cost of the Method and its uncommitted "scientism" have on the other hand led it into the service of those who could pay the price.

C. Wright Mills is for a social science with sensitivity to the broad sweep of history and imagination about the serious problems confronting society. His opposition to Talcott Parsons is not much more than impatience with his prose, which is difficult, and annoyance at his style of work. Talcott Parsons is concerned with the problem of a coherent field of social science. This may be an impossible undertaking, but it is a legitimate enterprise in the field. Mills speaks of Grand Theory, but he would have a hard time naming anyone else who is working at this task. Mills does of course disagree with the kind of metaphor which Parsons finds fruitful, but Parsons is moving toward a philosophy of history and society. If Parsons is drunk on syntax, Mills is drunk on history. The case is similar with the Method. Paul Lazarsfeld and many others have hopes for the fruitfulness of minute findings which can be verified. This is not very exciting work. The findings are often obvious. Nevertheless history-making in a democracy needs the kind of demythologizing which empirical work can produce. Mills is correct in saying that most of this work has been unimaginative, but this is more often the fault of the men than the method. From this type of work we have some idea of the consequences of various types of interracial housing. This is imaginative and significant work.

The point is not to soften the judgments in this book. Many of the author's criticisms are more than justified. His central concern however is misdirected. What he wants and what he feels is needed in our society are legitimate. They are not demands which can be met by social scientists as a group. They are not even demands which fall necessarily within the province of social science. In this respect Mills is pretentious in his hope for social science. This is quite clear when one considers the classic tradition.

With few exceptions the men in this tradition were products of a European classical education. Few if any of them would be considered social scientists in a contemporary understanding of the discipline. The most significant figure, though some might argue this point, was Max Weber. Fortunately for social science, he turned his economic, legal, and historical interests in the direction of social analysis. By contrast American social scientists are caught in the academic marketplace. They have had for the most part a limited educational background and a highly technical training in social science. With some notable exceptions they are technically trained in a non-classical style. They are under the bureaucratic pressures of a university to produce some research before they have had time to reflect on man or existence. They are hired to teach and paid for publications without regard for significance. To use Talcott Parsons' phrase, they are caught in a culture of universalistic achievement which is concerned with output and not quality. Their potential mobility is a function of the size of the research staff and the research funds which they can accumulate. If their

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publications are repetitions of the obvious, they can be put in "socspeak" so that the obvious is obscure.

This comparison of American social science with the classic tradition is of course not universally true. It is however the basic pattern of the trade. C. Wright Mills is urging open discussion of crucial issues in scholarly associations. He would do well to analyze a program of the American Sociological Society and try to find room in the myriad of research reports for some reflection, much less discussion. These remarks are not made in a cynical spirit. American productivity is still our most exportable asset. Thoughtful, socially sensitive, and imaginative minds are not mass-produced nor are they always mass producers.

C. Wright Mills is essentially correct. A society, especially a society in which the ruled are expected to share in the rule, needs reflective and imaginative critics and analysts. It needs, if you will, a working sociological imagination. It needs moreover a social thought which is not captive to the best-seller market and yet communicates with intelligible prose. There is no basis however for limiting this task to the social sciences. The important social thought over the centuries has been contributed out of many disciplines — philosophy, theology, history, economics, law, and letters. There is no reason to expect any change in this pattern except that social and physical scientists may also contribute as more thoughtful men enter these fields. The plea for a sociological imagination should be addressed to the intellectuals and the universities rather than to the social sciences. There are certainly mavericks in the academic market place who will risk their scholarly isolation to write in the field of man and society. They need not hesitate to intrude on the sciences of man and society, for these sciences seldom treat of man in society.

GIBSON WINTER.

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## BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS

### The Christian Tradition and the Unity We Seek

This book, originally a series of lectures given at the University of Virginia, is a "natural" for an academic audience. It is directed to the intelligent, thoughtful layman rather than to the author's fellow theologians. One of Dr. Outler's expressed concerns is that the modern ecumenical movement is still too much a province of a rather limited number of theologically sophisticated Church leaders. If it is to have a deep impact on the life of the Christian community of our time, it must become a matter of live interest to a far larger segment of the Church.

There are simpler and more popular books on the ecumenical movement but containing little discussion of the fundamental issues involved. A reader who is not versed in technical theological terminology might wish that on occasions Dr. Outler had found simpler words to use. On the other hand the thoughtful Christian layman should probably be as willing to learn new words relating to his faith as he is to adopt the current jargon of physics or psychology.

In his first chapter entitled "The Ecumenical Fact" the author makes the point that "The ecumenical honeymoon is over." The modern Church unity movement, tracing back to the early years of this century, has gone through a period of great acceptance and popularity. It has been exciting to get to know one another again across decades and centuries of division and to rediscover our great areas of agreement. Even the bridging of some of the areas of disagreement has been a joyous experience. But, says Dr. Outler, we are now coming to the point where we are "face to face with the residual problems — and they are acute, urgent, and desperately difficult. They are the ancient puzzlers and dividers of the churches: the nature of the church itself and, with this, the proper form of the ministry and the sacraments . . . Each of them is a matter about which honest and devoted men cannot be careless — and no amount of sentimental yearning will gloss over or bridge the ancient and deep cleavages which they represent."

His second chapter is a thoughtful analysis of the Christian sense of history — how the fact that Christianity *is* an historical religion and that we all share a common history as well as our separate histories as divided churches is a basis of hope for eventual unity. "Our common history — the history of the witness of faithful men to God's redemptive love in Jesus Christ — stands over against our partisan histories and separate traditions. It rebukes those who are content with their separate histories and those who claim that in their *separate* histories the *whole* of the common history may be found." Out of our common history comes a sense of the Christian community. It is broken and fragmented, yet in such organizations as the World Council of Churches a real sense of community

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*The Christian Tradition and the Unity We Seek* by Albert C. Outler. New York: Oxford University Press, 1957, 165 pages, \$3.25.

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is being felt once again. This fact alone, bringing with it an atmosphere and a temper in which we propose to live with each other while we work out our problems, is one of the hopes of the present ecumenical scene.

Sharing then in a common history and living within a wider Christian community, the churches and Christian leaders of today have to deal with the knotty problems presented by widely diverse traditions. In a brilliant chapter Dr. Outler contrasts *the Christian tradition*, given us by God, and the varying traditions of the churches. "What else [is *the tradition*] beyond the revelation of God in Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit through the Church? . . . By such a 'norm,' we could go on cherishing many of our several traditions, just so long as we do not confuse them with *the Christian tradition* . . . Nothing is more striking in an ecumenical gathering than the diversity of doctrines and rites there represented. And one of the distinctive features of such a setting is the added richness which this diversity gives both to discussion and the experience of worship and common action. If *the Christian tradition* is to be effectively handed on to *all* sorts and conditions of men, there must be many different modes and means of its transmission — but all of them must be aimed at and measured by their common and identical end. The unity of the church does not lie in the uniformity of her doctrines and rites, but in the unity of her witness to her common Lord — and to His Lordship in all of life."

In his final chapter Dr. Outler discusses the nature of the unity we seek. He speaks of course of unity with diversity and of the fact that there are no blueprints as yet for the "great Church" of the future. He comes back at the close to his opening point that the ecumenical movement has reached a critical stage — the easy steps have been taken. Do enough Christians care enough to continue through the much more difficult days which lie ahead? He analyzes the forces within the churches which operate to resist the ecumenical movement. These include inertia, the threat of the unfamiliar, the despair on the part of many of any real or final success, and fear — the fear of losing cherished values or fear of moving too fast and buying a superficial unity too cheaply. He closes with a positive description of those areas in which we may realistically hope for increasing agreement and eventual unity even with diversity.

Now is the time for decision. If we who are the members of the separated churches succumb to fear or inertia or despair, the ecumenical movement of our time will fail as all previous ones have failed. If we can muster the courage and vision and faithfulness to God's will to remain in fellowship with our brethren of other communions, the Holy Spirit may be able to lead us into undreamed of reunions. Every page of this book contains fresh and thought-provoking insights. It is hoped that many Christian scholars will be led to move outside of their own fields of specialization and to explore this area of such great importance to all of us.

CYNTHIA C. WEDEL

## BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS

### The Multidimensional World of Paul Tillich

Since 1933 Paul Tillich has been thinking and teaching in America. Since 1950 he has been internationally recognized as a prophet of our age. The message he gives today contains the many insights the man has gained over a lifetime of 73 years. In his *Theology of Culture* we have isolated essays and lectures chosen from his productivity since 1940. For those who eagerly read all that Tillich writes, the appearance of some of his earlier pronouncements in a handy compact volume is a welcome gift.

The editor of the book, Robert C. Kimball, has chosen his materials superbly. The substance of the abiding Tillichian message is clearly presented and the many-sided interests of the man emerge awesomely. There is a progression from basic principles to relevant application. It is not a systematic theology, but it certainly is a *Leitfaden* which can lead a reader through the mazes of Tillichian systematic theology.

The collection of essays is a good miniature presentation of the total Tillich. How does Tillich look in this cameo? Obviously it cannot help but show him up for what he is: daring, learned, urbane, tolerant, incisive, and sharply critical. It also makes him out to be a figure in whom the present dominates all his knowledge of the past. Tillich is making the present, but only because the present made Tillich.

Less important facets of his personality are made manifest. Except for one chapter of the book, there are no footnotes, and yet in every essay there are constant allusions to the thought and words of others. These thoughts and words are now part and parcel of Tillich and when he speaks the words he is not quoting but only giving us himself. In this context footnotes would be superfluous, pedantic, and irrelevant.

Secondly we note the utmost sobriety of his style. Yet there is passion in every word he writes. He does not use images and imagination like spangles and bows in gift-wrapping. His thought is itself image-fused and the technical terms he uses are audacious products of imagination. He is most orderly in his exposition. In the normal procedure a question is proposed and the answer presented according to a conscious outline, usually constructed on the basis of platonic trichotomy. He does not waste words and he is almost Euclidean in his rapid passage from one logical point to another. He gives his explanation briefly, nor will he blow it up with analogies and examples. He is not afraid to define. In fact he defines all the time and then sticks loyally to the definition

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*Theology of Culture* by Paul Tillich. New York: Oxford University Press, 1959, 213 pages, \$4.00.

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given. In his style he lives up to his own philosophy: allegiance to both essence and existence. The result is a satisfying intellectual experience because the reader meets rigorous thought and vitality simultaneously.

He is an original thinker but not an autodidact. He knows what the past has said and he does not despise it. He does indeed reconstruct it, and the terms he uses, time honored as they are, do not mean in Tillich what they meant to the men who first used them. This Tillich knows but he justifies his action by insisting that any new use of ancient materials cannot simply reproduce the past but rather creates a new thing in the present.

What is the content of this taut, vibrant style? If Tillich could have done it in a paragraph, he would have done so. Since he couldn't, we can presume it to be an impossible task. Yet it might be possible to give the quintessence of his vision. If it is possible, it would run along these lines. Man needs God who is ready to embrace man, and God showed his readiness definitively by becoming transparent to mankind in the historical model of Jesus as the Christ. These who with Christ accept their divine acceptance, though they are unacceptable, become new creatures. They are saved, healed, and made whole. In this succinct formula we have the primacy of God, the definitive revelation of God in Jesus as the Christ, and the good news of salvation. The fruit of salvation is the courage to be.

Yet this doctrine comes through the pages of Tillich through a complex process formed by phenomenology, philosophy, and theology. In his phenomenology Tillich shows man estranged from his true self, from his neighbors, and from what he ought to be. In his estrangement man is bedeviled with doubt, guilt, and anxiety. This is the phenomenology of human existence.

However it is precisely in his deepest depression when man is forced to the very edge of his boundary situation that he perceives that he still *is*. The power of being is manifest in his sorriest predicament, and man in his concern reaches its ultimacy. In this moment Being itself is self-revealed to man in an apperception which is not a subject-object discovery. It is a real apperception, neither natural nor supernatural, in which man sees that he is rooted in the ground of being, which is not to be identified with any one being and is yet present and functioning in every being. It is Being itself.

Being itself transcends the essence-existence dichotomy. It is neither an essence nor an existence. It is just Being itself, the necessary prius for all essence and existence. In symbolic language it can be called God. In consequence it follows that you cannot talk logically about the existence of God nor can it be philosophically proved. Existence always means a finite mode of being, and Being itself is never such a mode. God simply is and is the ground of being which is participated by all beings. God is known in the quasi-mystical apperception of the transcendence and immanence of Being itself.

From this point on, theology takes over. It is a discipline which deals

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with the ground of being, which phenomenologically is man's ultimate concern. The theologian tells us what he finds in his reflection on the apperception of the self-revealing God. The revelation is of course possible in any situation. There is a general revelation to be met in nature, in culture, and in religious traditions. However the definitive revelation is recorded in the biblical account culminating in the message of the New Creature introduced into the world by the appearance of Jesus as the Christ. In him the divine revelation is forever completed and God becomes transparent in a human life. Jesus as the Christ is the way, the truth, and the life.

However theological communication is limited to symbolical statements. A symbol is something finite pointing to something infinite in whose power it shares. The word God, if it says more than ultimate ground, is such a symbol. God-statements must never be taken literally but they must be taken seriously. They are not mere tropes or figures of speech. They point ontologically to the ground of being and manifest the many dimensions of reality which are all based in this ground. When we say that God spoke from Sinai we must not think that we are affirming the oral communication of an etherialized man on a mountain top. We do mean that in an historical moment Being itself was perceived by a prophet and the apperception served as a guide for human action.

The result of this doctrine of symbolism is that Tillich affirms and simultaneously denies all the statements made by scripture and traditions of the churches. He anxiously does both. And here is the point where Tillich disconcerts the reader. Is God personal? Tillich denies that he is and yet says that symbolically he must be so described. He cannot literally be a person or a trinity of persons because a person is a finite mode of being. Nor can he be called impersonal because the impersonal cannot adequately allay the ultimate concern of man. God does not exist but he is most real. We cannot know God in any subject-object discourse and yet we can certainly apperceive him. God is ineffable but we can say much about him. Jesus of Nazareth was not the deity but he was God incarnate because the deity shone through him luminously. Miracles in their literal sense never are and yet the miraculous self-revelation of deity is ever before our eyes. Tillich is an atheist in the sense that he is no theist but he believes in the God beyond theism. Tillich is pious and yet an iconoclast; he cherishes images and yet explodes them. With Islamic fervor he insists that only God is God, and nothing, even the most effective symbols, must be put in his place. He believes that God is mediated to us and yet our knowledge of him is immediate. He is distrustful of logical inferences and yet is meticulously logical in his thought and statements.

Tillich is truly theological and strictly ontological. By making theology the discipline of ultimate concern, he can approach anything and everything from the theological perspective, the standpoint of ultimacy. In consequence he discusses with insight history, psychology, science, art, and civilization and yet

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always remains the theologian. He is highly respectful of tradition and the Council of Chalcedon is for him most important. Yet Chalcedon would have condemned him. He is a Christian who believes in the Church but no church in existence can command his allegiance.

When these paradoxical statements are heaped up, as we have done here, the mind whirls. In consequence Tillich has been called many names. Not a few have called him the destroyer of authentic Christianity. From Fundamentalists this accusation should be expected, but non-Fundamentalists have made the accusation as well. He has been called a gnostic because he rejects the propositions of faith in their more obvious meaning and looks for an esoteric content in the light of psychological symbols and existentialist concern.

Yet Tillich does not accept these accusations. He believes himself to be authentically Christian according to the demands of the Christian tradition. He admits that he is reinterpreting the tradition but he also believes that only by such reinterpretation can Christianity be meaningful to man today. And he believes that the reinterpretation is true to the Christian message.

It is so hard to make a judgment on Tillich. I simply cannot be convinced that he is wittingly or unwittingly a fifth-columnist destroying Christianity from within. His preoccupation with the Christian tradition is beyond all doubt genuine. His selection of certain elements in that tradition is for the purpose of edification and not for destruction. The modes of knowing God are oft discussed in the Christian literature of the past. Anselm of Canterbury said something profound, even though Thomas Aquinas was not satisfied with it. Meister Eckhardt and Johann Tauler were Thomists and yet they made statements which are almost identical with the propositions of Tillich. Essence and existence are key concepts of medieval theology and the struggles they caused are with us yet. In this struggle Tillich is on the side of Thomas and not with the nominalists, past and present. Augustine, so dear to Tillich, is fond of paradox and his psychology of knowing rests on the pervasive presence of God in man. Tillich's symbolism, as I have tried to show elsewhere, is an attempt to understand reality in terms of intrinsic analogy, a notion Thomas Aquinas considered and elaborated. There is much of Catholicism in Tillich and this he willingly admits because he thinks that Catholicism preserves the Christian substance better than Protestantism.

But Tillich wants to be a Protestant. In this he glories. For him the genius of Protestantism is in the prophetic protest against all idolatry. Only God is God and no tradition, no book, and no institution can stand in his place. In faith, the apperception of the accepting God, the Protestant knows God immediately and in his immediacy he judges all things. Judgment is crisis, criticism. In loyalty to God who has grasped the believer, man must speak what he has seen and apperceived no matter how this pleases or displeases men and institutions.

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I am inclined to believe that Tillich has understood Protestantism much more profoundly than most Protestants. As a Catholic I can contemplate Tillich in all serenity and be thrilled by the brilliance of the man. I do not take my faith from Tillich, but his work makes me study my own tradition more deeply with increased understanding, though Tillich does not understand things as I do. Protest is by its essence destructive though its intent be to purify and make wholesome. The surgeon who excises a tumor also excises the organ or part of it where the tumor is situated. The patient may indeed live but he is not the man he was before the operation.

The legitimacy of Tillich's protest is a Protestant question. It does not concern the Catholic. If the Protestant adversaries of Tillich be right in their rejection of this vibrant theologian on the grounds that he is destroying the essence of Christianity, let them reflect that perhaps they are criticising Protestantism more than Tillich. Certainly this is not their intention, but if they accept Tillich's view of Protestantism, they can hardly find Tillich unfaithful to it. If they conceive Protestantism differently, they are bound to formulate their own conception. Then we can compare the two definitions and test them in terms of coherence with the historical Protestant fact.

To me a Catholic, Tillich's theology is helpful for the understanding of Protestantism. Tillich knows much, is ontological in his point of view, and strives for organic unity. There are opaque areas in his total thought but it is a structured thought with a conscious effort to make the structure and unity stand out. Catholic theology esteems these things highly, and it is therefore easier for Catholics to read and somewhat understand Tillich's theology than the more kerygmatic expositions of other Protestant theologians. If Tillich's thought is not good Protestantism, Catholics can only wish that other Protestants would express the authentic thing after the manner of Tillich.

GUSTAVE WEIGEL, S. J.

#### The Free Church

Professor Littell is a church historian who is not content to describe and interpret events and movements of the past. He has a sense of mission about commanding for its relevance and value in the present the historical movement with which he is best acquainted, namely the so-called "left wing of the Reformation." The argument is stated simply. He believes that modern Protestants have permitted themselves to be influenced too heavily by the traditions which

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*The Free Church* by Franklin H. Littell. Boston: Starr King Press, 1957, 150 pages, \$6.00.

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were incorporated in the European and British established churches — either Lutheran, Reformed, or Anglican. The moderns accept too readily the condemnations leveled against all the non-conformist churches of the Reformation era and so write them off as fanatics. Thus are overlooked today the true Free Churches of the Anabaptist-Mennonite following which still have a considerable and most important contribution to make to Protestantism as a whole. Included among the elements of this contribution are a strong sense of the Christian community as a living fellowship of the Holy Spirit, a pattern of rigorous corporate discipline, and an attitude towards secular society and authority which is both suspicious and responsible.

Scholars who carry torches for certain causes tend to overstate their cases; and Littell is not free from this tendency. It cannot be doubted that he reconstructs a very compelling picture of the Anabaptist-Mennonite Christians by his judicious selection of little known passages from the sixteenth century records. He successfully draws the line of distinction between the Christians who initiated the Free Church tradition of sound biblical and voluntarily disciplined order and those, like the tragic fanatics of Münster and the spiritualizers whom Luther called "pests" (*Schwärmer*), who corrupted this movement and gave it a persisting and devastating reputation for religious fantasy and extremism. He makes no defense for the latter group which are succeeded in the present time by such diverse and unrelated bodies as the Jehovah's Witnesses and

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Christian Science. Nevertheless the reader is moved to protest that Littell presents his Free Church pattern as something approaching a panacea for the disabilities of contemporary Christianity. That Protestant Christians need sound policies and strategies with regard to family disintegration, public education, and the regnant "culture religion" of America cannot be doubted. These questions Littell discusses in detail. But it seems that, in his zeal to show the inherent superiority of the Free Church tradition as a medicine for the Church's failure to deal with these issues, he has given insufficient credit to the churches of the Lutheran, Reformed, and Anglican traditions which are also contending with them. Of course it could be argued that the relative success of these latter churches in standing against the temptations and hostilities of the modern age is dependent upon the resources which they have appropriated from the Free Church tradition. Thus, when Lutherans are seen to be adamant in their resistance to totalitarianism in East Germany as many of them were earlier against the Nazi party, their virtue is regarded as somehow inconsistent with Lutheranism as such and more in accord with the Free Church spirit.

In summary Littell's thesis about the unrecognized values of the Free Church or Anabaptist-Mennonite pattern of church life and order is vulnerable only at the point of his overstatement of it. And his great service to both historian and modern churchman in this book as well as his *Anabaptist View of the Church* (1952) is his undistorted description of the churches in this other important movement of the Reformation which in a quiet way has in fact exerted great influence upon modern Christianity.

Yet there is one nagging deficiency in this valuable and interesting book, and it is a serious one. Littell never gives us a concise definition of the Free Church he is commanding. Obviously he is not intending to say that the present Mennonites and cognate bodies are the only Free Churches. Nor is he using the name in the common British sense of nonconformist or simply non-Anglican bodies. If the Free Church is distinguished from the Established one, then all American churches are of this category. Granted that some of our denominations tend to look like the *Volkskirchen* of late mediaeval society, they militantly maintain their autonomy. So the question of an adequate definition of the key concept of the book remains unresolved.

Littell is a Methodist, teaching church history in a theological school of that denomination. He has had long and varied experience in Europe and in the ecumenical movement. So his advocacy of the heritage of the Anabaptists is not a kind of sectarian pleading. He has the well-being of the whole Church at heart and is persuaded that his historical scholarship has introduced him to a way of Christian life and order which the whole Church ought to understand and appropriate. Thus there is justification for his combining this historical research with a rather tractarian presentation of its results.

J. ROBERT NELSON

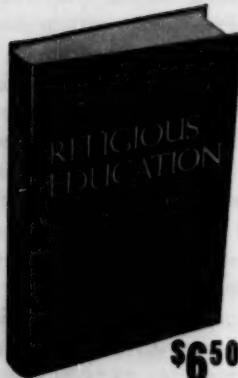
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## BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS

### The Theology of the Sacraments

More books from the hand of the late Donald Baillie have been published since his death in 1954 ("as Reformation Day was passing into All Saints' Day" is the way Prof. J. S. Stewart aptly dated it) than he himself had published before it. This is surely an odd, and perhaps unique, phenomenon. It is a mark of the extraordinary devotion and love he inspired in all who knew him. In this country we tend to keep our theologians and saints pretty well apart: if theologian, then sinner; if saint, then bad theologian. But too much posthumous publication is a bad thing; Baillie himself would have wondered at the publication of his two books of sermons (*To Whom Shall We Go?* and *Out of Nazareth*) and would doubtless have insisted that these lectures on the sacraments were by no means ready for publication. On his own terms they were not. It is none the less a good thing to have them, for they stand as the clearest and most useful single introduction to sacramental theology that is available today. Without consciously distinguishing his own Reformed position from the Incarnational-sacramentalism of William Temple and the Anglican tradition, his book vividly shows the inadequacy of this older approach.

One facet of Baillie's approach should be observed, for it is not likely to speak as directly to us as most of the rest of the book. Baillie writes with the Catholic tradition very much in mind, anxious both to appropriate and to criticize that tradition as carefully as possible. In this country the Reformed tradition is probably not ready to be told of the strength of the Catholic position on sacraments, but rather needs to be convinced that there can be sacraments at all.

The first two lectures, "Sacrament, Nature and Grace" and "The Sacraments and Sacred History," deal with the introductory question: "Why do we need sacraments in the first place?" He touches on the familiar treatment of that question in Prof. Tillich's essay, "Nature and Sacrament," and like Tillich, rejects the answer that declares we have them because Jesus instituted them. But unlike Tillich, Baillie also criticizes the view that the basis of sacramental theology is the presence of something holy or theandric about nature itself. In his discussion of the sacramental universe approach of Temple, Baillie clearly distinguishes between a natural and a sacramental theology: nature indeed, he declares, can be used sacramentally, not because of any general revelation given through it, but because the God whom we know in historical event can be discerned, once He has come to us in event, in the world He has made. Nature reminds then but does not reveal. Both the psalmist (121: 1) and Calvin are interpreted in this way.

There are two parts to his answer to the question "Why sacraments?" First, we need them because we are not pure spirit, but men of flesh and blood,

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*The Theology of the Sacraments* by Donald M. Baillie. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1957, 158 pages, \$3.00.

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fallible, finite, and sinful. Thus we need not only words to hear but actual elements to taste and gestures to observe. The sacraments are, in Calvin's sense, part of God's condescension to our humanity. As noted above, Baillie denies with Tillich that our sacramental practice is directly based on Jesus' words of command, but he does note that both of the Gospel sacraments portray with real clarity the meaning of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. Because of the vividness of baptism and Lord's Supper in pointing to the sacred story, we can make a case, Baillie affirms, for an indirect if not a direct "institution" of the two sacraments in the New Testament.

The third lecture on baptism is, at least for a Baptist, the least convincing of the book. Baillie reviews the current discussion on baptism, accuses the Baptists of having no solid theological foundation for the place of children in the church, and works out the now familiar defense of infant baptism as a genuine sacrament because of its symbolic witness to the prevenient grace of God.

The finest chapter in the book, and one of the most impressive pieces of theological exposition of our time, is the fourth chapter titled "The Real Presence." In an earlier chapter, discussing faith and grace, Baillie had insisted that grace is truly present in the sacraments and had refused to hand over this idea to the Catholic position. But grace was defined in Oman's terms as a gracious personal relationship given by God to man. How could its presence be denied? To deny that grace is present in this sense — and many Protestants still feel that it is somehow necessarily Protestant to do so — would be a strangely anomalous thing: while granting God's general spiritual presence all over the place, denying it to the Church's central act of worship.

But grace is not present *simpliciter*; it is present to faith. Not because of faith; nor does faith bring grace into the picture. But God's grace is spiritually (Baillie interestingly defines "spiritual" as "personal" here) present to faith, working through it: first creating and then strengthening it. A doctrine of the real presence is defended in this chapter but not before a description is given of the meaning of "presence" when applied to God. Presence is further related to memory and hope; God is present only in terms of the total sacred story. And in the Lord's Supper the events of this whole story are remembered and anticipated as well as presently received. In this eschatological context then the divine presence in the Church is veiled and broken, but it is real (not in the traditional sense of the presence of the *res* as well as the *signum*, but in a common-sense interpretation of real), as real as God's presence can ever be in the world of space, time, and sin.

The concluding lecture, "The Eucharistic Offering," attempts to evaluate the conception of sacrifice as appropriate both for the Christian ethic and for the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. There is a radical rejection of the Roman doctrine of the Mass here and a careful analysis of the meaning of sacrifice both in the Old Testament and in the death of Christ. It is Baillie's contention that the

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Reformed tradition must speak of both a table and an altar: the movement from God to man (table) and the offering of man to God (altar) are really a single movement, and the two cannot be separated. "So when we approach God's holy altar with our offerings of faith and worship, it also becomes the Lord's table, where we receive the heavenly food of His grace, mercy, and peace."

To any who suspect that the place to look for a renewal of a genuine sacramental theology is Geneva rather than Canterbury, this book will come as a real delight. It should put the problem of the sacraments into the forefront of our theological deliberations, and no longer in the hands merely of the liturgical revivalists.

WILLIAM HAMILTON

#### The Dilemmas of Politics

This is the ninth in a series of Faculty Lectures delivered at Park College. The present series consists of three lectures by Professor Jerzy Hauptmann who is currently serving as chairman of Park College's Department of Political Science. Dr. Hauptmann came to the United States in 1950 after receiving the doctor's degree from the University of Innsbruck. His lectures reflect an interesting combination of continental and American scholarship in the social sciences. But he draws most heavily upon the thought of persons like Werner Sombart, Max Weber, Maurice Duverger, Ludwig von Mises, Friedrich Hayek, and Wilhelm Roepke.

In the opening lecture Dr. Hauptmann distinguishes sharply between political science (which is primarily concerned with discovering facts about the political process), political theory (which is concerned with drawing generalizations from the facts of political life), and political philosophy (which is concerned with the normative evaluation of varieties of political organization). In the second lecture he describes two "ideal types" (in Max Weber's sense) of political systems: democracy and totalitarianism. He then compares them on the basis of their component parts which he lists as spirit, constitution, and method. The democratic method of popular control is contrasted with the totalitarian plebiscite. The democratic constitution which is described by Carl J. Friedrich as a "system of effective, regularized restraints upon the exercise of governmental power" is contrasted with totalitarian emphasis upon central direction and control. Whereas the spirit of democracy is pluralistic, the spirit of totalitarianism is monistic. "Whereas the individuals, the governed, are emphasized in a democracy; in totalitarianism the party group, the ruling class, is the center of attention." It is the author's contention that these two ideal types exist

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*The Dilemmas of Politics* by Jerzy Hauptmann. Parkville, Missouri: Park College Press, 1957. 48 pages, \$1.00.

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nowhere in actual form but that "each state in the world, each political unit in any state, each community in our country can be measured against the standard of these ideal types."

The author then goes on to contrast two ideal types of economic systems, the centrally planned economy and the market economy. The market economy is characterized by free competition in which the forces of supply and demand have full play and the existence of a rational "economic man" is presupposed. In the centrally planned economy regulations by a central planning board takes the place of the forces of supply and demand, production is for use and not for profit, and economic decisions are made by the government not by the market. It is the author's contention that democracy is incompatible with central planning. "The method of popular control used in a democracy makes it impossible to regulate the economy from a central place, because central planners necessarily assume that they have a total view which is not available to the voter. A constitution based on restraint of power can not be structured to give the government the right to determine the sphere of economic action. The democratic spirit of pluralism cannot possibly allow anybody to determine consumer habits." The author next contrasts two "ideal" social systems, individualistic and collectivistic. In one kind of social system, the "inner-directed" man predominates, in the other the "other-directed." "Compulsion, uniformity, simplicity are some of the basic characteristics of social life in a collectivistic society" while "volition, variety, and intricacy" characterize the individualistic social system.

In the third and final lecture Dr. Hauptmann argues that "the philosophical assumption which each of us has, will determine which of the ideal political, economic, and social systems we embrace." His own preference is clearly stated. "We try to make clear . . . that the political system of democracy resulting in the economic system of a free market and based on the social system of individualism is the goal we accept. We also try to prove . . . that at times in the past this goal was much closer than it is at the present time. We would like to recapture this set of ideal systems, because it makes sense to us; and it makes sense because we can see that the spiritual assumption of an inner-directed man in pluralistic politics and a system of economics based on subjective value preferences can be viewed in a broader perspective, can be viewed in terms of certain enduring principles and aspirations of man to which we subscribe. And we arrive at our personal, political commitment, which for us is based on humanism, libertarianism, conservatism and Christianity."

There is not much that is new in Dr. Hauptmann's argument. It has been presented before, notably by Friedrich Hayek in his *Road to Serfdom* which of course the author acknowledges. Christianity is utilized for the argument that "the sinful nature of man" cannot be changed "by changes in environment, by social legislation, by social institutions. Needless to say, all such changes have

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in our opinion only superficial value. They do not redeem from the consequences of his fallen nature. Such a redemption is only possible through God's redeeming grace. Is this redemption possible in history? Our point of view fits the neo-orthodox, or better still some fundamental tradition, that this redemption can be approached, that individuals actually are being saved, actually are being 'reborn,' but that the Kingdom of God is not of this world."

By limiting our choice to two "ideal types" it seems to me that Dr. Hauptmann weights the scales in favor of his own preference before the argument even begins. At the same time he makes the complexities of choice appear much simpler than they are in actuality. While it is true that Christianity teaches us to seek a Kingdom which is not of this world, yet at the same time it urges us to prepare for its advent by refusing to be conformed to this world. If there are aspects of collectivism against which the Christian must testify, so there are aspects of individualism to which he will also object. The Christian finds himself, no matter what the system, in the position always of a critic and a leaven, in the position of a critic precisely because no political system can be identified with the Kingdom of God and in the role of a leaven because he has the obligation to strive with God's help for the realization of the Kingdom. Dr. Hauptmann would appear to ignore the fact that social institutions themselves often perpetuate evil and that to seek their reform is not necessarily to expect perfection. Working for the redemption of the world (i.e. the reform of our political, social, and economic institutions) is one of the outward and visible manifestations of an inward and spiritual grace. If redemption is won at all, it is won *in* the world, in the struggle with the evil that resides not only in ourselves but in our social institutions, and it is won, if it is won, not in individual isolation but in the fellowship of pilgrims inspired by the hope that is in Christ.

JOHN H. HALLOWELL.

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